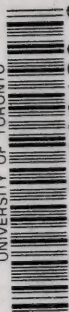


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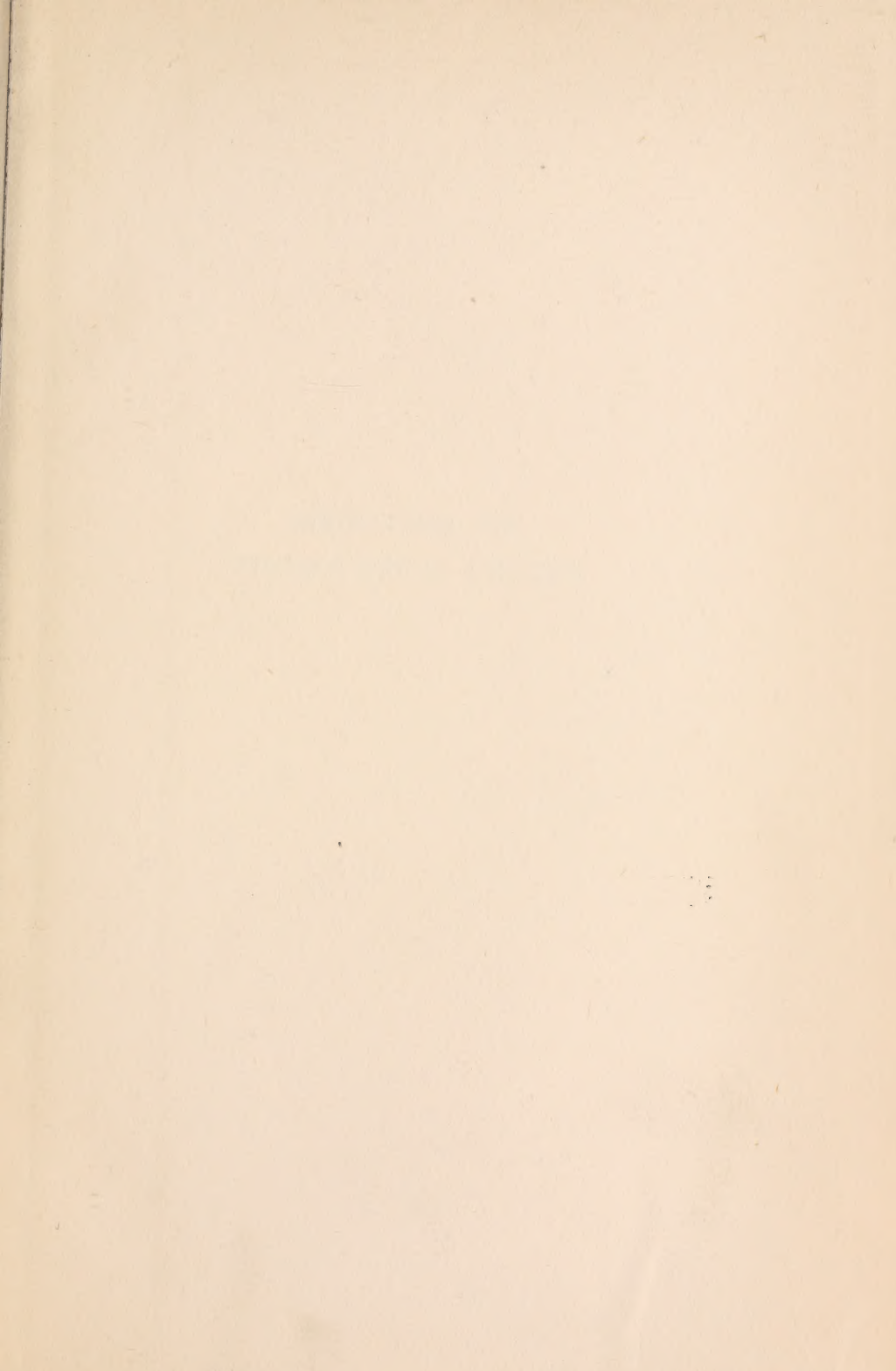















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**MEMOIRS OF  
FRANCESCO CRISPI**





THE MEMOIRS  
OF  
FRANCESCO CRISPI

Compiled from Crispi's Diary  
and other Documents by

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Translated by

MARY PRICHARD-AGNETTI

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ON the 20th of March 1890, William II. of Germany appointed General Count L. von Caprivi, Chancellor of the Empire and President of the Prussian Ministry, as successor to Prince Otto von Bismarck. On assuming his high office, von Caprivi despatched the following letter to F. Crispi, who had been Minister of Italian Foreign Affairs since August 1887.

(Private.)

BERLIN, *April 3, 1890.*

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,  
—By the wish of my Sovereign I have undertaken the task of directing the political affairs of Germany, as the immediate successor of the greatest statesman this country has ever had.

My own inclinations as well as the logic of things in general having long since taught me to regard the present grouping of political friendships with strong approval, I had grown familiar with the idea of having, perhaps, to defend the principle on which it rests in my military capacity, should its defence become necessary.

But my August Master has decided otherwise. He has called me to co-operate with statesmen who

aim at the defence of the present state of affairs by essentially peaceful means.

Matters standing thus, I beg to assure you, Honourable President, that as long as I shall continue to hold my present position, the German Empire will maintain its honest and peaceful policy, never swerving from the principle of remaining, under all circumstances, the true friend of its friends. This is the line of conduct my Sovereign as well as my own conscience imposes upon me.

I therefore entreat Your Excellency to grant me your confidence in the performance of our common task. My confidence the Minister my country is happy to call its friend has long possessed.

I beg you, Honourable Minister and dear Colleague, to accept the frank and cordial expression of my highest esteem.—Yours faithfully,

VON CAPRIVI.

To this communication Crispi replied as follows :—

(Private)

ROME, *April 7, 1890.*

HONOURABLE CHANCELLOR AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,—I am in receipt of the letter which you had the goodness to send me on the third of this month, to acquaint me with the spirit in which you have accepted the heritage of the great statesman, whose successor the Emperor, your August Master, has seen fit to appoint you.

I thank you for your cordial frankness in explaining your views.

In you, I was already well acquainted with the brave soldier, the able general and the experienced administrator. I am now glad to know the politician, and to find him entertaining the same sentiments by which I myself am animated.

The principles of general politics which you maintain are such as to justify you in counting upon my loyal support. I will labour conscientiously with you as I did with Prince Bismarck, for the maintenance of peace. But if, by some ill fortune, the day should come on which Italy and Germany, being attacked, should find themselves confronted with the painful necessity of assuming the defensive, rest assured that I, following the example the King, my Sovereign, would set, and together with the whole Italian people, would be ready to acquit myself of the duty devolving upon me, and that honourably and to the very end.

In pursuance of this line of thought, I can assure you of the satisfaction it will afford me to co-operate with you in safeguarding, to the best of our abilities, the welfare of the two dynasties and of the two nations we serve.

I beg you, Honourable Chancellor and dear Colleague, to accept the sincere and cordial expression of my high esteem.—Yours faithfully,

F. CRISPI.<sup>1</sup>

This letter, which the Italian Ambassador, Count de Launay, presented to the new chancellor in person, produced a most favourable impression. ‘He read it in my presence,’ de Launay wrote, ‘and expressed the most lively satisfaction with its contents, which coincides precisely with his way of thinking, and with the common interests of the states forming the Triple Alliance, the essential aim of which is the maintenance of peace. He was kind enough to say that to a *novice* like himself in all matters concerning foreign politics, the support of a statesman of such standing and experience as the Italian Prime Minister was invaluable.’

General von Caprivi was highly esteemed throughout Germany. During the Franco-Prussian contest he had dis-

<sup>1</sup> Both of these letters were in French.

played so thorough a knowledge of the science of war, and such admirable attributes of character, as to deserve the Iron Cross of the first class as well as the order *Pour le Mérite*. As director of the Admiralty, which post he assumed in 1883, he had rendered valuable services by greatly improving both the material and the organisation of the navy, with the very inadequate means at his disposal, but with true Prussian tenacity of purpose.

In politics, however, the new chancellor was an unknown factor. He certainly had ideas of his own, but he had never publicly manifested them, and although for five years he had participated in the sittings of the Reichstag, his one endeavour had been to hold aloof from all party strife, and remain on strictly technical ground.

Now, a man may be possessed of a lofty intelligence, broad culture, and the initiative faculty in certain fields of action, and yet prove incompetent as a political governor. In choosing General von Caprivi among the many candidates for Otto von Bismarck's succession, the Emperor was playing a hazardous game, for there existed no data to justify the assumption that Caprivi would succeed in the accomplishment of his arduous task.

In July Count Caprivi expressed to Crispi his wish to visit him in Italy, and on the eleventh of that month Crispi telegraphed as follows to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

‘On his return from Berlin, Count Solms brought me His Excellency Count Caprivi's greetings, and acquainted me with his wish to come to Italy and meet me. I assured the German Ambassador that the Grand Chancellor's kind intention gave me great satisfaction, that he would be most welcome amongst us, and that I should be delighted to entertain him in my own house, either here or at Naples, as might best suit His Excellency's convenience.’

There now arose the question of the date of the visit. The first months of his chancellorship were singularly laborious for



General Caprivi, and it was difficult for him to absent himself from Berlin. In a letter dated October 1, Count de Launay reported to Crispi that he had been granted an interview by the Chancellor, at which His Excellency had confirmed

‘. . . his lively desire and firm intention of conferring with Your Excellency in Italy. The delay is due to circumstances beyond his control. As yet he has never left Berlin save to accompany the Emperor to Narva and to the grand manœuvres in Silesia. But so numerous are the matters to which he must give his personal attention in order that the duties of his new office may be adequately fulfilled, that, for the time being, he is unable to carry out his plan for a trip beyond the Alps. Among other things, he has, as yet, been unable to return the visits which the Ministers of Bavaria and Württemberg paid him on his assumption of office. General von Caprivi observed that this unavoidable delay would at least have the advantage of giving him time to familiarise himself with those questions which are of interest to both Powers, and thus enable him to confer with Your Excellency to better purpose.’

On October 20 Crispi again referred to this visit, after having received a second communication to the same effect as the first from the German Ambassador at Rome.

‘I hear,’ he wrote to Count de Launay, ‘that His Excellency has been obliged to postpone the execution of his plan for reasons of public service. Were it not for the political conditions now prevailing in Italy, and the approaching general elections which necessitate my remaining at home, I myself would have gone to Germany, thus sparing His Excellency an inconvenient journey. I am

handicapped, however, by the responsibilities of my public capacity, but if His Excellency could arrange to come as far as Milan towards the end of this month or at the beginning of November, I would gladly meet him there. An interchange of useful ideas in the interest of the two monarchies we are both honestly seeking to serve, would then be possible, and might lead to the conclusion of certain arrangements by which both nations would profit.'

The German Chancellor having replied that he would be at his Italian colleague's disposal any time between the first and tenth of November, Crispi telegraphed as follows to de Launay on October 22 :—

Inform the Chancellor that I shall be delighted to receive him in Milan on November 7.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The German Chancellor's visit was a demonstration of consideration for our country, officially identified in foreign lands with the person of Crispi, and no matter what the general feeling might be regarding the advantages to be derived from the Triple Alliance, a sense of national solidarity in the presence of a stranger should have made it a duty, even with the opposition parties, to grant him a reception that should be, at least, deferential. Certain radicals, however, blinded by political passion, published their intention of organising a hostile demonstration, and on November 1, the Prefect of Milan telegraphed as follows to Crispi :—

'Last night at a meeting of the Democratic Society, Cavallotti proposed a banquet as a protest against Caprivi's visit. The discussion was most heated. Proposal opposed by Mussi and Porro, was overruled in spite of Cavallotti's threat to withdraw his candidature for deputyship.'

On the following day the same Prefect telegraphed again :—

'Further reliable information enables me to inform Your Excellency that the idea of a banquet as a protest against Grand Chancellor's visit came from France, and through S—. Cavallotti was appointed to launch it. Met with general opposition. . . . Cavallotti much annoyed, has gone to Meina, declaring intention of withdrawing his political candidature to represent Milan.'

Crispi's one thought on receipt of these despatches was how best to spare his guest any unpleasant experiences. He telegraphed to *Com-mendatore* Rattazzi, Minister of the Royal Household, begging him to express to the King his desire that Caprivi be invited to reside in the royal villa at Monza. The King consented at once, as may be seen from the following telegram from Rattazzi, dated November 2 :—

'I immediately communicated contents of your despatch to His Majesty, who desires me to inform you that you have full authority to offer the

The Chancellor arrived in Milan on the day appointed. He was cordially welcomed by Crispi, the authorities and the population of the great city, whose points of interest he visited, the mayor acting as his guide. On the day following he was invited to Monza by King Humbert, who gave a dinner in his honour and conferred upon him Italy's highest order, that of the *Santissima Annunziata*.

Caprivi immediately inspired Crispi with confidence and acquired his warm regard. The Chancellor was a man of gigantic proportions, whose face wore an expression of severity but at the same time of kindness, and who gazed forth from beneath bushy eyebrows that reminded one of those of Bismarck. As was his wont, Crispi set down in his Diary an account of the two interviews he had with Caprivi.

After lunch (1 P.M.) Caprivi and I withdrew to his salon for an interchange of ideas.

I remarked that on May 30, 1892, that is to say eighteen months hence, the treaty of alliance between the three monarchies will expire. I added . . . Necessary to examine . . . whether there is anything else to be added. I am convinced that the German government will wish to renew the treaty for a further term of years.

The Triple Alliance is not only useful to the contracting parties, but it also ensures the peace of Europe. Now, we being interested in preserving the territorial guarantee of the three countries as well as European peace, must desire the continuation of the alliance.

Chancellor the hospitality of the villa at Monza, in His August Majesty's name.

'His Majesty is grieved to hear of your undeserved anxiety, but adds that he is convinced Cavallotti's despicable attempt will fail completely, and that the Milanese will refuse to follow his lead.'

As a matter of fact, the disapproval of a large majority of Milanese democrats caused the idea of a discourteous demonstration to collapse, and Count Caprivi, who, of course, remained in ignorance of the passing anxiety to which his coming had given rise, was entertained in Milan, at the Hôtel Cavour.

Count Caprivi declared himself to be entirely of my way of thinking, and grasped my hand as if in confirmation of this. He was pleased to find that our views coincided, and promised to give his attention to the treaty.

I then reminded him that in 1887 we had associated Spain, after an exchange of notes. The Duke di Vega de Armijo, however, neglected the understanding that had been established, and allowed negotiations to lapse. But now, our friend the Duke di Tetuan being once more in power, these negotiations should be resumed and the bonds tightened between ourselves and Spain.

The three great allied powers should interest themselves in the lesser monarchies and seek to defend their institutions. With this in view, it is most important that a means be found of settling the differences now existing between England and Portugal.

Spain and Portugal are rapidly being undermined by republican emissaries, whose influence they are not strong enough to withstand.

Spain should be brought to reorganise her navy, for she may be of use to us in the Mediterranean, and, should occasion present, she would be in a position to strike a blow at Algiers. The French army corps stationed there would thus be engaged. Moreover, a Spanish army beyond the Pyrenees and ready to cross them would paralyse another body of French troops.

Republican propaganda is active in those countries. The French use the same methods in Italy.

‘I am astonished to hear that!’

They work in the same way in Italy, but our country withstands their efforts. The great majority



of our people are conservative. The country is eminently monarchical in sentiment. Republican propaganda is a necessity with the French. With the government at Paris it is a question of life or death. The same thing happened under the first republic, but then, of course, the conditions of Europe were not the same. The two great states, one this side of the Alps and the other beyond the Rhine—Italy and Germany—did not exist. We must therefore hold close together, and defend the institutions with which we have endowed ourselves.

‘I am entirely of Your Excellency’s opinion, and will work with you for the maintenance of monarchical principles.’

Bismarck did great things for which his country has every reason to be grateful to him. But he made one serious mistake—that of not favouring the restoration of the monarchy in France. He believed the republic, fretted by the different parties, would remain a weakling. The contrary has happened, however, and never was France so strong as to-day.

‘The Emperor of Russia pointed out the same fact to me.’

The monarchies should avail themselves of every means at their disposal for combating republican propaganda. France will soon be having a new customs tariff. This tariff will be to our disadvantage, because it will make it possible to close French markets to our agricultural products. You will also feel its effects. By virtue of the Frankfort treaty you enjoy the advantages of the favoured nation. This condition can exist only so long as there are conventional tariffs; it ceases with the abolition of the treaties. Now France is going to

abolish all her treaties and apply an autonomous tariff to all nations. This act contains a threat of war, of an economic war, not less terrible than war with the rifle and artillery. We must prepare to retaliate, and I believe we shall be able to do so. I am not contemplating a customs league amongst the three allied powers—that it would certainly be difficult to establish. We should, however, study a system of beneficial tariffs, calculated to facilitate traffic and draw us closer together. We should add an economic league of this sort to the military and political league already existing, which arrangement, while inoffensive to the autonomy of the three states, would strengthen them against France. I should propose that the governments place the study of this important question in the hands of those proficient in the matter. Their studies once completed, each government should appoint say two delegates to meet and formulate the proposals, to be given the form of a treaty.

‘I think Your Excellency’s plan is a wise one, and I will have this important question examined, and acquaint Your Excellency with the result.’

We then discussed some matters of minor importance, and finally parted with mutual expressions of cordial and sincere friendship.

*November 8.*—At 11 A.M. Count Caprivi came to return my visit. We again took up the questions we had touched upon yesterday. Biserta. Alters the conditions in the Mediterranean. Dangers in time of war. Caprivi sees the importance of this, but points out that a protest might lead to a break with France, and that it will be wiser to wait. In April, when the army rifles are to be changed, we might enter our protest.

The Chancellor left Milan on November 9, well satisfied with the reception he had received and the results of his visit. Three days later, on November 12, the Italian Ambassador at Berlin sent the following report to Crispi:—

The Imperial Chancellor has just left me. He confirmed what I had already learned yesterday at the Imperial Foreign Office, namely, that he was deeply touched by our August Sovereign's kindness and much gratified by the high distinction conferred upon him by His Majesty. He has also derived the liveliest satisfaction from his interviews with Your Excellency, and declares that he shares your views in full both from a political and a commercial standpoint, and especially as regards the questions that formed the subject of your conference. His Excellency immediately reported the result of his mission to the Emperor. His Imperial Majesty manifested his pleasure at this fresh proof that the relations now existing between Italy and Germany are and will remain of a most satisfactory nature, tending to the furtherance of the Triple Alliance and the monarchical principle. The Chancellor begged me to make known the excellent impression his journey has left with him, and to express his thanks for the many courtesies that were lavished upon him both at our court and by Your Excellency. His only regret is that the duties of his position obliged him to curtail his stay in Italy. The Chancellor also displayed much satisfaction at the reception he received from the municipal authorities and the people of Milan.

The Austro-Hungarian Chancellor, Count Kálnoky, was of course informed through the Imperial Ambassador at Rome, Baron von Bruck, and the Royal Ambassador at Vienna, Count

Nigra, of what had transpired at the two conferences. Count Nigra telegraphed as follows on December 1 :—

‘Kálnoky has begged me to thank Your Excellency for the communication made to Bruck, which was confirmed in detail by Reuss and Caprivi. Both problems will be studied and examined in due time. To-day the commercial conferences between Austria-Hungary and Germany are to be inaugurated. From their results we shall be able to judge whether and to what extent it will be possible for the two empires to proceed in preparing the way for an agreement of an economic nature amongst the three allied States.’

The following correspondence passed between Count Nigra and Crispi :

*December 4, 1890.*

MY DEAR COUNT,—I am late in fulfilling the promise I made you in my despatch of November 18 from Turin, but you will understand the reason for this delay.

At our interviews of November 7 and 8, Caprivi and I discussed the Triple Alliance from the political as well as from the economic and commercial point of view. We were fully agreed on all points, and I think it will suffice if I acquaint you with the conclusions we reached, without setting forth our conversation in full.

There is no question but that the alliance of the three monarchies must be renewed. No one has any right to assume that the political conditions of Europe will have altered by May 1892. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the reasons for which the treaty was stipulated in 1882, and renewed in 1887, will still be unchanged.



Will it be advisable to modify the treaty, or add anything to it? That is a question for the three governments to answer, and they have still ample time to consider it. One thing, meanwhile, appears evident . . . and on this point Count Caprivi agreed with me.

We also agreed as to the necessity of improving the commercial conditions of the three states, by mutually conceding especial advantages calculated to facilitate our intercourse and bind us so firmly together that we shall be able to withstand the attack which France would make upon us should her Chamber make the new customs regulations so severe as to render an adjustment impossible. We do not contemplate a customs league amongst the three states, but simply a modification of import duties.

This premised, we agreed that the three governments shall arrange to have the various points inherent in this weighty question carefully studied. When this is done we shall appoint two delegates for each state to examine the problem and the measures proposed for its solution.

As long as France remains a republic—and this form of government appears to have taken firm root—she will continue a menace to the monarchies of Europe. Russia must see this already, Paris having become the refuge of nihilists, and the two peninsulas, Italy and Spain, have recognised the fact, both from the moral propaganda and the financial support lent to the subversive parties, by the government of the neighbouring country.

We in Italy are strong enough : the monarchical sentiment is profound, and withstands all revolutionary propaganda. We fight it, and will not

brook defeat. Nevertheless, we must not hide from ourselves the fact that the Vatican tends to avail itself of the radicals' support, as became manifest during the recent elections. Cardinal Lavigerie, in this new phase of his, is working with the Pope. Some of the cardinals disapprove, and the French clergy are disunited, but we do not know what may happen later on.

The two monarchies that are threatened are the Portuguese and the Spanish, and of the two, the Portuguese more seriously. Should it fall, and the republic be declared at Lisbon and Madrid, there is no doubt but this would be the beginning of that political transformation which France has an interest in bringing about in Europe. The three governments should give their attention to this not improbable eventuality, exchange views on the subject, and, where necessary, adopt active diplomatic measures.

Count Caprivi assured me he was convinced of this necessity, and promised to act accordingly.

The subjects deserving attention being thus set forth, and the criterion established according to which the governments of the three monarchies shall conduct themselves, it now rests with you, *Signor Conte*, to confer with the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to make all necessary arrangements with him, and report his intentions to me. I leave it to Your Excellency's vast experience to fill any gaps this communication may contain, in order that those ends may be attained of which the German Chancellor also most heartily approves.

And now receive my cordial greetings.—Yours  
faithfully,

F. CRISPI.

VIENNA, *December 10, 1890.*

I hereby confirm the information contained in my first despatch. I have acquainted Kálnoky with the contents of your letter. He agrees on most points with Your Excellency and Caprivi. . . .

As regards the commercial question, he foresees that difficulties will arise from Article XI. of the Frankfort treaty.<sup>1</sup> He asks for time to study both questions. Meanwhile a basis on which to found mutual commercial concessions between Austria-Hungary and Germany will soon be established, and this will facilitate matters for Italy also. In considering the two problems, Kálnoky is animated by an ardent desire to bring about a complete understanding. He also shares Your Excellency's views regarding the advisability of uniform diplomatic action for the defence of monarchical institutions.

NIGRA.

<sup>1</sup> Article XI. of the final treaty of peace concluded at Frankfort-on-the-Main, on May 10, 1871, between the German Empire and the French Republic. (Exchange of ratifications, Frankfort, May 20.)

The treaties of commerce with the different German States having been annulled by the war, the French and German governments will take, as a basis for their commercial relations, the régime of reciprocal treatment, founded upon the advantages enjoyed by the most favoured nation.

This rule comprises all duties of import and export, of transit, customs formalities, admission and treatment of the subjects of the two nations and of their agents.

This rule, however, will not be applied to those favours which one of the contracting parties has granted or may grant by means of commercial treaties to any other than the following States: England, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, and Russia.

The treaties of navigation, the convention regulating the international railway service with regard to the customs, and the convention for reciprocal guarantee of copyright on literary and artistic works, shall be reinstated.

The French government, moreover, retains the right of levying tonnage and ensign imposts on German vessels and their cargoes, such imposts, however, never to exceed those levied on the ships and cargoes of the above-specified nations.

(Telegram.)

ROME, *December 15, 1890.*

Baron von Bruck has read me a note from Count Kálnoky in which he declares that the Austrian Minister shares my views on all the points that came under discussion between Count Caprivi and myself, and of which I gave you a summary in my private communication of December 4. Meanwhile he requests me to specify my ideas concerning the modification of the conventions of 1887. This I will do.

In discussing with Bruck the subject of the improvement of commercial and economic relations, we agreed upon the necessity of proroguing the right to denounce the treaty of December 7, 1887, for at least one year, in order that both parties may have time to study this important question. Bruck is writing to Kálnoky this very day, to obtain authorisation for an exchange of notes. Kindly mention the matter to him, urging him to avoid delay, as time presses and I shall be called upon to answer several interpellations on this point at the Chamber.

CRISPI.

(Telegram.)

VIENNA, *December 16, 1890.*

I have urged upon Kálnoky the necessity of hastening the exchange of notes concerning the proroguing for one year of the right to denounce treaty of commerce. Kálnoky entirely agrees with Your Excellency. He telegraphed to Pest at once, and has submitted proposal to Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. He believes no obstacles will be raised, but perhaps it may be necessary to



obtain sanction of Parliament for exchange of notes, which, according to Kálnoky, might not be obtainable until after the end of December.

Kálnoky has promised to avoid delay, and I will continue to press him as much as possible.

NIGRA.

## CHAPTER II

### TRIPOLI AND FRANCE

The Triple Alliance and Italian interests in northern Africa—France on the Tripoli-Tunis frontier as early as 1890—A memorial by General Dal Verme on the historic boundary between Tunis and Tripoli—The Anglo-French agreement of August 5, 1890—Crispi remonstrates with the English government—Said Pasha's note on the *Hinterland* of Tripoli—How the final usurpations by France might have been prevented—Crispi and the French government, which disavows all intention of claiming Tripoli—A new French map of Africa—Minister Ribot's declarations to the Chamber—Crispi's protest—State of the question in 1894—The Franco-German convention—France attempts to encroach upon the Egyptian Sudan—Fashoda—New Anglo-French agreements to the disadvantage of the Tripoli *Hinterland*—Italy relinquishes her rights in Tunis without compensation—The Franco-Italian agreement of 1902—Crispi's activity in Morocco—The Italian occupation of Tripoli and an evil omen.

FROM the preceding documents, which, owing to the inviolability of state secrets, are of necessity reticent concerning the exact terms of Italy's alliance with Germany and Austria, we may nevertheless infer what the aims of Crispi's foreign policy were at the close of the year 1890. The time was approaching when the treaty of alliance would expire, and experience had shown that, while guaranteeing a peace which the three Powers enjoyed alike, this advantage exposed Italy alone to the relentless war waged against her by France on the field of economics at home and on that of politics abroad. The theory of the reciprocal independence of economic and political conditions could not be applied in our case, for there was no denying the fact that the alliance was the cause of much injury to us, exposing us, as it did, to French hostility, the consequent severing of commercial relations, and incessant attacks upon our international credit.

Crispi had plainly demonstrated to the German Chancellor that great political alliances cannot be confined to a certain category of interests, and that, in order to obtain the greatest possible benefit from it, the treaty in question should be made to provide as well for the defence of the main interests of each one of the allies, in the complex relations of international life. General Caprivi had accepted this view, and requested the Italian Minister to formulate his proposals.

But the question to which Crispi directed his colleague's attention most particularly, as one containing a threat of serious and imminent danger to Italy, was the conduct of France in northern Africa.

Some months previously Crispi had revealed to the Cabinets of London, Berlin, and Vienna the intention on the part of France to convert her protectorate of Tunis into annexation, and he had succeeded in prevailing upon the three Powers to remonstrate at Paris. He had but little faith, however, in the lasting efficaciousness of diplomatic pressure, and therefore determined to take advantage of it without delay, and force France to treat Italian interests with greater consideration. Convinced that sooner or later France would make herself mistress of Tunis, Crispi, determined to get what he could out of an action he could not prevent, refused to relinquish the privileges Italy had enjoyed under the former Regency, privileges guaranteed by treaties. Compensation for relinquishment must take the form of Italian dominion in Tripoli.

The difficulties in the way were great, however. The French themselves intended to expand towards the east. As they had justified the occupation of Tunis by declaring it necessary to ensure the peaceful possession of Algiers, so later the occupation of Tripoli would be declared necessary to ensure the possession of Tunis, and French supremacy in the Mediterranean would become an accomplished fact. Proofs were not wanting that these imperialistic aspirations did indeed form part of the government's programme.

The Anglo-French agreement, establishing the spheres of English and French influence in Africa, which bears the date of August 5, 1890, clearly revealed the determination on the part of France to make herself mistress of the Tripolitan

*Hinterland.* This agreement represented the requital for the recognition by France of the English protectorate in Zanzibar, and it was indeed fortunate that Lord Salisbury refused to allow the French claims to concessions in Tunis. Her Majesty's Prime Minister would probably have yielded had not Crispi, supported by the Chanceries of Berlin and Vienna, despatched an earnest remonstrance to London. He sent Lord Salisbury word—

‘ . . . that His Majesty's government, on the several occasions on which the question of Tunis had been discussed between Rome and London, had felt that there existed in the English Cabinet a tendency to make concessions to France, concessions disadvantageous to Italian interests, which, Italy believed, were England's interests as well, and as regards which, even had the government itself any intention of yielding, public opinion would brook no compromise: that consequently, in order to maintain and further develop those friendly relations between the two countries which form the main guarantee for the peace of Europe, it had now become necessary for Italy to acquaint the English government with the fact that she must decline to lend her support to any transaction calculated to benefit France by altering the *status quo* in Tunisia, either politically or materially.’

When France occupied Tunis in 1881, the boundary line between Tripoli and the Regency passed along the coast to the west of the bay of El Biban. This may be easily ascertained by consulting the two most reliable French maps, one by Prax and Renou, the other published by the *dépôt de la guerre* from Captain Falbe's observations. Hardly had the French occupation become an established fact when the occupying army turned its attention to the Tripoli frontier.

In the course of the months of August and September 1881, three military expeditions started simultaneously for the south-



east of Tunisia. The generals Logerot, Philibert, and Jamais were in command of the three corps of which the expedition consisted. General Logerot himself was in command of some 15,000 men. His advance, which was not unattended by difficulties, was checked by the Slass tribesmen near Fum-el-Bab, but after an encounter in which General Logerot was victorious, he finally reached Gafsa and occupied it. From Gafsa the general pushed on towards Gabes, where the three corps forming the expedition met and joined their forces. He now proceeded to traverse the whole of southern Tunisia, without, however—and this is an important detail—crossing the *Uadi-Fessi*.

In consequence of this expedition the three great tribes of the Slass, Hamamma, and Beni-Zid, together with other malcontents from the Sfax district, some 260,000 persons in all, crossed over to Tripolitan territory, under the supreme command of Ben Khalifa, the chief who had organised the defence of Sfax. These rebels now became a source of never-ending disturbance and revolt all along the Tunisian frontier.

The French government, alarmed by this permanent menace, directed all its efforts towards pacifying the rebels and persuading them to return to Tunis. The French Consul-General at Tripoli, Féraud, and General Allegro, commonly known as *Jusef Negro*, whom the French had persuaded the Bey to appoint governor of the province of Arad, in recognition of his services at the time of the occupation, exerted themselves to obtain this result, and little by little their efforts were crowned with success.

In April 1885 Féraud was replaced at Tripoli by Destrées, who pursued the same course as his predecessor, and facilitated the return to Tunis of the last remnant of the rebels.

Thanks to this happy result, France was now free to advance towards the east.

In May of the same year the French Resident at Tunis, Cambon, visited southern Tunisia. Crossing the frontier, he advanced as far as Oglad Djemilia. Later on, in July 1887, he declared to our Minister at Madrid, Marchese Maffei, that this excursion had convinced him that the true boundary of Tunisia is the Uadi-Mochta. The broad stream which

Cambon called the Uadi-Mochta, had, up to that time, been known as the Uadi-Sigsao, *mochta* in Arabic meaning *frontier*.

In the month of October 1886, three French vessels appeared off the coast of Tripoli, dropped anchor at Cape Macbes, and began surveying the neighbouring coast. Learning this, the Governor-General of Tripoli sent out a Turkish corvette under the commanding officer of the maritime station of Tripoli. This superior officer having demanded by what right the French commandant was surveying a coast belonging to Turkey, that officer revealed his own ignorance by declaring he had believed it to be a portion of the Tunisian coast, of which he had orders to prepare a hydrographic chart. The Turk insisted that the coast was a part of Tripoli, and the French finally withdrew, leaving at Ras Tadjer or at Adjir a column in masonry which they had erected. Soon after this the French Consul-General, Monsieur Destrées, presented himself before the Governor-General of Tripoli to inquire for what reason the Turkish Commandant had obliged the French Commandant to withdraw from Cape Macbes. The Governor-General gave him the desired information, whereupon the French Consul protested that the proprietorship of the place in question was doubtful.

In the month of December 1887, the Bulletin of the French Geographical Society announced that the boundary line between Tunis and Tripoli had been definitely established by an agreement recently concluded between Turkey and France, and that the new frontier had been carried forward to Ras Tadjer, thirty-two kilometres beyond the old boundary. His Majesty's government immediately communicated this information to Blanc, Italian Ambassador at Constantinople, who called on the Grand Vizier without delay. This functionary emphatically denied the existence of the pretended convention, and declared it to be inadmissible that Turkey, who did not recognise the French protectorate of Tunis, should enter into *pourparlers* with France for the purpose of establishing the Tunisian frontier. On the day following, the Sultan himself made a no less categorical declaration to Baron Blanc. His Majesty assured the Ambassador that he would neither tolerate the displacement of the frontier as described by the Bulletin of the French Geographical Society, nor subscribe to

any arrangement that implied recognition of the French protectorate of Tunis. It was the Sultan's opinion that France was endeavouring, by means of intrigue and the spreading of false reports, to drive Italy to some act which would involve her in 'the Tripoli Question.'

The same piece of news continuing to appear in different newspapers, the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople once more complained to the Sublime Porte, and persuaded Said Pasha, who was Grand Vizier at the time, to instruct the Sultan's Ambassador at Paris, Essad Pasha, to demand that General Allegro be recalled, and a categorical denial published of any alterations of the frontier.

It was about this time that the Ottoman government decided to expel from Tripoli the fraction of the Uargamma tribe which had settled in that region extending along the ancient Tunisian frontier known as Giufara-el-Garbia, which is one of the richest grazing districts in Tripoli. The presence of these Tunisians on Tripolitan soil might afford France a pretext for pretending that this region belonged to the Regency of Tunis, a Tunisian tribe being established there in undisputed possession.

An expedition was despatched from Tripoli under the command of Brigadier-General Mustafà Pasha. The corps was composed of 1400 men—800 foot, 350 cavalry, and the rest artillery. The expedition halted, however, at Zuara, and did not press forward again. By means of intermediators the general warned the Uargamma chiefs that they must quit the territory they were unlawfully occupying, but that, should such be their desire, they were free to settle in the region of the *Syrtis Major* (Gulf of Sidra). The Uargamma, paying little heed to this warning, divided into two groups, one settling at Gibel Nalut, the other at Djemilia, and all thus remaining on Tripolitan territory.

The French Consul at Tripoli, whom the Vali had officially informed of the expedition, hastened to convey the news to the French Resident at Tunis. A commission composed of the Secretary-General of the Regency and of the French Secretary for Native Affairs, started at once for Zarzis on board a man-of-war, to join General Allegro, who had preceded them. Allegro, either on the strength of inaccurate informa-

tion or in order to forestall a possible event, had warned Destrées of Mustafâ Pasha's supposed advance on Djemilia. The Consul sought the Vali, and with a display of real or feigned emotion, desired to be told the truth concerning the accuracy of the information. He added that Djemilia belonged to Tunisia, and declared that any attempt upon it on the part of Turkey would be looked upon by the French as a *casus belli*. The intimidated Vali hastened to assure Monsieur Destrées that the rumour was false, but he nevertheless once more ventured to declare that Turkey's rights to Djemilia were incontrovertible, as the region belonged to the Huail, a Tripolitan tribe.

On December 31, 1887, the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople once more interviewed the Grand Vizier to ascertain precisely what Turkey's intentions were. The Sublime Porte had explained its views in a Memorial sent to Photiades Pasha, the Sultan's Ambassador at Rome, and the Italian Ambassador had objected to four of the articles it contained :

1. The Porte, notwithstanding intrigue on the part of France, had not occupied the ancient boundary line of Tripoli, nor had any commissary officers been sent thither.
2. The Porte had not demanded a public and official disavowal of the French General Staff's maps.
3. The Porte had never publicly declared that the territory to the east of El Biban was and would remain a part of Tripoli.
4. The Porte had not demanded that Allegro be recalled, although the Vali had indeed suggested this.

The Ottoman government replied that it failed to understand the reason for an objection to Article 1, as the imperial authorities in that province had never relinquished a single place under their jurisdiction, which fact had made it unnecessary to send special commissaries to the spot.

In the second place, the Ottoman government had considered it superfluous to demand an official and public disavowal of the map issued by the French General Staff, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs having declared, when questioned, that he was unaware of its existence (!), adding that even did



such a map exist, it could possess no significance until ratified by both governments, of which declaration the Porte had taken note.

As regards the third point, the Porte replied that the Press of Constantinople had been ordered to deny the existence of the convention regulating boundaries mentioned in one of the bulletins of the French Geographical Society, and that the French papers had also printed a communication denying all rumours that had been spread concerning any negotiations on that subject between the Porte and France. A promise had furthermore been made that the Bulletin of the Society would print a rectification in its next issue.

Finally, as regards General Allegro, the Porte declared that it had indeed demanded his removal, but without giving the communication sent to Paris an official character, being unwilling to recognise the state of affairs created in Tunisia by the French occupation.

In conclusion, Turkey claimed the territory to the east of El Biban as belonging to Tripoli, or, in other words, maintained the ancient frontier.

In 1888, after the Turkish expedition, the rest of the Tunisian refugees in Tripoli returned to Tunis.

Hereupon France began fortifying southern Tunisia, that is to say Zarzis, Matamma, Tatauin, and Duirat, after having raised the number of the resident corps at Gabes to 2650 men, and set apart in the Tunisian budget the sum of 900,000 francs for the strengthening of the first three of the above-named places.

Towards the close of the year 1887 the semi-official journal of the Regency, *La Tunisie*, published an official communication relating to the frontiers of Tunis. It was herein stated that Italy 'had raised a question concerning the rectification of the Tripolitan frontier, and talked of open negotiations with Turkey, under pretence of safeguarding the balance of power in the Mediterranean, but in reality because Italy, somewhat prematurely perhaps, looked upon Tripoli as her property.' It had therefore become necessary to clearly delineate the Tripolitan frontier, which, according to *La Tunisie*, starting from the sea, was clearly established, by the Mochta and Chareb Saonanda, as far as Oglat-ben-Aisar,

then by a line starting from this point, passing Ben-ali-Marghi, and to the north of Uessan, finally reaching Ued Djenain, and losing itself in the Sahara.

The communication continued as follows:—

‘It is well known how jealously the Turks guard the territory of Tripoli; now, their forts are all to the south of this line which Turkish soldiers never cross, and at which point they consign returning fugitives to the Tunisian authorities. This frontier, moreover, which was wrested from the Uargamma by the Uled-Debbar four centuries ago, was definitely ratified in 1815 by a treaty concluded between the Regency of Tunis and the Porte. Salem Ben Odjila, chief of the Uderna, is in possession of an act bearing the seals of the magistrates both of Tunis and Tripoli, in which the frontier we have outlined is minutely described. This act was executed towards the close of the last century. The traveller Barth, writing in 1849, also mentions the Mochta as forming the dividing line between Tripoli and Tunis.

‘We may also mention the journey undertaken in 1886 by Monsieur Cambon, accompanied by the deputy, Monsieur Fernand Faure and Commandant Coyne. The army itself, which, labouring under a misapprehension at the time of the occupation, had stopped at Ued-Fessi, soon learned from the natives themselves that the frontier must be carried some thirty kilometres farther south.

‘As Turkey never disputed the Regency’s right to this frontier, she has caused the Franco-Turkish agreement which was talked of in the Italian Chamber to be denied. Negotiations or agreements of any sort were superfluous where no question existed until the Italians themselves raised it.

‘That public opinion may not be deceived, we will close with the statement that the military and administrative organisation of this frontier region is being rapidly pushed forward. The establishing of military posts in this district will not only ensure its safety but also protect the French possessions against any encroachment, in case a European power should establish itself in Tripoli.’

The misrepresentations contained in the above communication may be easily perceived. The statement that Turkey had never disputed the Regency’s claim to the Mochta frontier is

refuted by the Sultan's declarations and those of his Grand Vizier, to the Italian Ambassador, of which we have already given an account. There is also mention of a treaty signed in 1815, which never existed, and which would not even have been possible, as, at that time, the Porte was not in possession of Tripoli, where the Karamanli dynasty reigned until 1835. Nor does the act bearing the seals of the Sheikhs exist, or if it does, it can be nothing but a forgery. As for the Mochta which Barth saw on his travels in 1849, it could not have been the *chott* to which the French gave that name, but which was previously called Uadi-Sigsao; it was (and this Barth clearly states) a slight dip which he perceived about two hours from the ruins of El Medaina, and therefore long before arriving at Uadi-Sigsao. From the point he reached he could hardly have seen the *chott*, now called Mochta, it being simply a low-lying region at a distance of some thirty-five kilometres from the above-named ruins.

In the early part of the year 1887, after Mustafà Pasha's withdrawal, Turkey began removing her garrisons along the western frontier. The five-and-twenty men stationed at Remada, an important point within the new Tunisian boundary, were recalled. The garrison at Kasr-Fazua, near Cape Tadjer, was treated in the same way, and removed to the fortress of Bu-Kammech. Four hundred men were also withdrawn from Zuara. Thus Turkey not only weakened her position on the threatened frontier, but voluntarily surrendered that territory to which, but a short time before, she had loudly proclaimed her right.

The rest of the year 1887 and the whole of 1888 passed uneventfully, save for some skirmishing between certain Tunisian and Tripolitan tribes. Nothing had pointed to further changes when suddenly, in the month of February 1890, the Italian Consul at Tripoli was informed that certain tribes of the Nalut region, called the Oglad-Dahieba, had despatched messengers to the Vali, invoking protection against a fresh invasion by the French. Some French *Spahis* had crossed into their territory, and, declaring it to belong to Tunisia, had sought to compel the inhabitants to pay the taxes into the hands of the Bey, and refuse all future payments to Turkey. The Italian Consul furthermore learned that the Governor-General had assured

the chiefs of these tribes that this was a matter which must be settled between France and Turkey, and one with which they need not occupy themselves. He had ended by enjoining upon them to return to their own country, without informing any one of the nature of their mission.

This first information was later on confirmed, in part at least, and in part modified. As a matter of fact, in May of that year, the Vali, being pressed for an explanation by the Italian Consul-General, replied that two or three months previously the French had compelled an Arab to produce his deed of proprietorship (*hoget*) to a certain tract of land he had cultivated in a part of Tripoli which 'was under dispute.' The Vali, therefore, was ready to admit the existence of a dispute. The French, he said, had maintained that, according to their maps, the territory in question belonged to Tunisia. The Arab, however, having obeyed their command and produced his *hoget*, the French had taken possession of it and refused to return it to him. In order to avoid a repetition of this incident the Governor-General had summoned the chiefs of the tribe to which the Tripolitan farmer belonged, to appear before him and bring their deeds of proprietorship with them. The Vali had then caused copies of these deeds to be prepared, which copies he had consigned to the owners, the originals remaining in his possession. The Governor furthermore declared that a Tripolitan tribe which had resided in Tunisia for the last sixty years had appealed to him to supply them with a declaration to the effect that they had originally come from Tripoli, and were therefore under no obligation to pay taxes to the Bey. He had informed them, however, that he could not comply with any such demand, and had advised the tribe to return to Tripolitan territory.

At this same time the Vali informed the Italian Consul-General that the French had also sought to win the Tuaregs over to their cause; that they had encouraged them to draw nearer to Gadames and to appropriate the territory which, by virtue of the recently established boundary line, extends from Algiers on one hand and Tripoli on the other as far as Tunisia. These French manœuvres had received the support of the Sciamba, an Algerian tribe.

Such were the facts stated by the Vali, and they clearly



demonstrate that Turkey, or her representative at Tripoli, admitted the existence of a dispute concerning a territory which not only the Sublime Porte but the Sultan himself had declared belonged to Turkey, and also that the Vali recognised that Tunisia might possess rights to territory situated to the west of the Uadi-Sigsao, which the French wished to call the Mochta.

Another fact cannot be passed over in silence. In the month of November 1888, France succeeded in getting the Tunisian tribe of the Akkara, established at Djemilia, and about one hundred of their tents stood for a month in this district. The intention was evident to so arrange matters that, at a favourable moment, a claim to that territory might be advanced, and occupation be rendered easy. Turkey neither protested against this settlement nor raised any objection to it.

At the very moment when this Tunis-Tripoli question had reached its acute stage, and Italy had informed the powers interested, of all particulars, a revolution broke out in the territory of Ghat. It was brought about by a spurious Scherif, calling himself a Frenchman, who was not, indeed, of the Arab type, and whom the Pasha of Tripoli believed to be a tool of the Republic. This Scherif preached war against French and Turks alike. The Tuaregs revolted against the Turks, occupied Ghat, murdered the Kaimakhan, and imprisoned the Cadi. Forty soldiers of the garrison perished in the struggle, the rest surrendered. The rule of the Tuaregs at Ghat was of short duration, however, lasting only until the Governor of Tripoli sent thither a most influential Tripolitan Arab, who succeeded in re-establishing Turkish authority. It should be observed that this revolution was stirred up by the faction of the chief Knuken, a faithful friend of the French, and the same individual who had brought about the understanding between the Tuaregs and Marshal MacMahon in 1870, by means of what was known as the treaty of Gadames. It is evident that France, having held sway in Algeria for over sixty years and in Tunisia for nine, must have possessed numerous and efficacious means of exerting an undesirable influence over the inhabitants of Tripoli and Fezzan and the people of the desert.

Nor must we omit to mention further incidents, such as

frequent incursions on the part of the French into Tripolitania. In 1886 General Allegro, accompanied by two Tunisian sheikhs, traversed the main thoroughfares of Tripoli without troubling himself to visit the Vali, but conferring at length, however, with the French Consul. Similar episodes occurred frequently and under the very eyes of the Turkish authorities. Again, in July 1890, the Vali informed the Italian Consul-General of fresh intrigues on the part of France in the Gadames region. Reliable testimony left no doubt as to the accuracy of the information. French agents who had started from southern Algiers, repaired to Tamassinin, the capital of the Tuaregs-Ajasser, and negotiated with the chiefs for the cession of that city to France, or at least for its temporary occupation. Tamassinin is a place of the greatest importance for the caravans that travel from Gadames to Tuat, and thence to the Sakoto. The Tuaregs received the price demanded for the cession, but, as frequently happens with these people, disappeared without fulfilling their promise. A body of *Spahis* was despatched by the French government in search of the fugitive Tuaregs. They were the bearers of letters for the notabilities of Gadames, and amongst these was one for the wealthiest merchant of that region, a certain Toher Bassiri, who also had a residence at Tripoli, and had at one time served the Consul Féraud as secret agent. The Kaimakhan of Gadames succeeded in seizing this correspondence and forwarded it to the Governor-General. Bassiri was arrested and brought to Tripoli, where, however, he was promptly set at liberty. On the very night of Bassiri's arrival at Tripoli, the Vali went, as was his wont, to spend the evening with the French Consul, prolonging his visit far into the night, and it was, moreover, a matter of common knowledge that the Vali and Monsieur Destrées were on terms of intimacy.

In conclusion, the situation towards the middle of the year 1890 may be summed up as follows: in deed, if not by right, French territory had been increased by several thousand square kilometres, by the extension of the Tunisian frontier towards the south-east; the principal places in south-eastern Tunisia had been fortified, while Turkey had reduced her garrisons along the frontier line. In Tunisia everything was in readiness for a rapid concentration of troops upon the Tripolitan

frontier. Thanks to the Bona-Guelma railway, opened to traffic on May 1, 1887, large bodies of troops could be transported from Algeria to Tebessa, whence a military road led, by the way of Feriana and Gafsa, to Gabes. The Vali of Tripoli would have been unable to offer any serious resistance to an offensive movement so thoroughly prepared.

As throwing further light on the problem with which the Italian government was confronted at the close of the year 1890, the following memorial, compiled by General Luchino Dal Verme at Crispi's request, may not prove superfluous.

- I. Apart from all those arguments to be deduced from diplomatic documents the examination alone of the maps of this region plainly demonstrates the fact that the historical boundary line between Tunisia and Tripolitania is not the one claimed by France, but another, some thirty kilometres to the westward. This, moreover, gives Tripolitania a desert of her own to the south of the Algerian Suf.
- II. The usurpation of the territory between the old and new boundary lines is disadvantageous to the power holding sway in Tripoli, both because of the occupation already accomplished and of the danger of future usurpation to which the first points and has opened a way.
- III. The Anglo-French agreement of August 5, 1890, while appearing to respect the Tripolitan *Hinterland*, in reality leaves France free to act as she may see fit in the regions of the east, and this to the serious detriment of the power which rules in Tripolitania.

## I.

Nine different maps of the region in question have been examined. Most of these were French, and all but one were official publications. Two of the maps were English, and one was German, but no Italian map has been taken into consideration. The result of the examination is set forth below, in chronological order.

1. *Chart of the Gulf of Kabes*, 1838. This is the hydrographical chart of the English Admiralty (No. 249) on which the boundary line in question is distinctly traced, being marked *Boundary between Tunis and Tripoli*. The *Mediterranean Pilot* (official) describes it as follows: 'Within ras el Zarzis is a fort of the same name. A short distance west of the fort is the boundary between the States of 'Tunis and 'Tripoli.'

2. *Carte de la Régence de Tripoli, dressée par MM. Prax et Renou*, Paris, 1850 (scale 1 to 2,000,000), the oldest and one of the most reliable maps, both because it was drawn from observations made and information gathered on the spot, and because it was constructed at a time when there was nothing to be gained politically by a displacement on the map of the natural boundaries. It carries the south-eastern frontier of the 'Tunisian regency from the fortress of El Biban on the coast, directly to the Gabel Nekerif. Hence, after continuing for a short space in the same direction, the line turns to the north-west, then runs westward, and finally south-westward, leaving the Algerian region of the Suf to the north. It thus includes in Tripolitania a territory which, although but a desert, stretches north-westward towards the Suf,



nevertheless, for a distance of nearly 180 kilometres from Gadames, while on the west it extends far beyond the third eastern meridian of Paris.

3. *Carte de la régence de Tunis, dressée au dépôt de la guerre d'après les observations et les reconnaissances de M. Falbe, capitaine de vaisseau danois et de M. Pricot de St. Maria, chef d'escadron d'état-major français, étant directeur le colonel Blondel.*—Paris, 1857. (Scale 1 to 400,000.) This map of Tunisia, which was the first issued by the French government, shows no political frontier either on the south or east, but terminates on the south-east with the *uadi* Fissi (elsewhere written Fessi), beyond which, to the south of Lake Biban, and precisely on that tract which the maps of the present day issued by the same government establishment include in the regency of Tunis, are the words, printed in large letters: *Ouled Houeil*, and, in brackets immediately below, *Tripolitan Tribe*.

4. *Côte septentrionale d'Afrique entre Zarzis et Tripoli: levée en 1871 par le capitaine de vaisseau E. Mouchez, membre de l'Institut: publiée au dépôt des cartes et plans de la marine en 1878: corrigée en novembre 1880.* On this map, the official hydrographical chart of the French navy, published some twenty years later than the preceding one, the ubication of the *Ouled Houeil* with the accompanying qualification, *Tripolitan Tribe*, is unaltered.

5. *Karte des Mittelländischen Meeres.* Dr. Petermann, edited by J. Perthes, Gotha, 1880 and 1884. (Scale 1 to 3,000,000.) The frontier in question is here traced from the western extremity of Lake Biban to the foot of the Duirat mountains, to a point some seventy or seventy-five kilometres from Nalut. The *uadi* which flows thirty kilometres

beyond the above-mentioned frontier, is called the *uadi Segsao* from beginning to end.

6. *Wyld's Map of Tunis*, undated, but published before the year 1886 (scale 1 to 1,107,532), shows the Tunis-Tripoli frontier clearly defined by a straight line, which, starting from El Biban, traverses the lake of the same name and brings up at the Duirat mountain range, at a point about the same distance from Nalut as that indicated on the preceding map. As on the German map, so also on this of Wyld's, the *uadi* flowing farther to the east is called the *Zegzao*, a *z* having been substituted for the *s*.

7. *Carte des itinéraires de la Tunisie, dressée et publiée par le service géographique de l'armée*. Two editions, 1885-87. (Scale 1 to 800,000.) On the map published in 1885, the name *Mokta* is for the first time applied to the *uadi* which heretofore all the maps had set down as *Zegsao*, *Sigsao*, or *Segzao*. In Arabic *Makatà* means line, trench, or ditch, and conveys the idea of a dividing line. *Mokta*, according to the famous Barth, signifies *Grenzgebiete*, or *frontier territory*. Along the course of this *uadi*, once the *Segsao*, now the *Mokta*, the political boundary is traced.

8. *Carte d'Afrique (Feuille n. 6) publiée par le service géographique de l'armée, 1887*. (Scale 1 to 2,000,000.) On this map all the innovations introduced by its predecessor, published by the same government establishment, are of course reproduced. It encroaches to a greater extent in all directions, however, and reveals the whole course of the new frontier, which, passing near Oezzán (but leaving Oezzán to Tripoli), turns towards the desert which it skirts as far as the Oasis of Gadames, to the north of which

it stops, at a distance of four-and-twenty kilometres from the city.

9. *Carte de la Tunisie, par le service géographique de l'armée; édition provisoire, 1890.* (Scale 1 to 200,000.) This is the latest map of Tunisia, edited by the *Service géographique de l'armée*. The new boundary, which is here traced in detail, starts from the sea at Ras Adjir, following the *uadi* called Mokta until it is joined by its tributary, the Khaoai Smeida; the line then runs first westwards and then south-westwards, in such a manner as to leave Oezzán just beyond the frontier, and in the hands of Turkey. We are still unaware how the southern boundary is arranged, as the two southern sections of the map are as yet unpublished. On the whole, this is but a confirmation of the boundary as given on the two preceding maps, which were issued by the same government establishment. We note, however, that the extent of coast-line between the old boundary at the fortress of El Biban and the new one at Ras Adjir, is here reduced to five-and-twenty kilometres.

In conclusion, we may declare that the examination of these maps clearly proves :

(a) That in no one of them, either French (official or private), German, or English, published previously to the year 1885, do we find the present boundary line from the sea to the Duiat mountains, or even one similar to it. Nor is the name Mokta applied to the *uadi* of Segsao, or Zegzao, on any of these maps.

(b) That the territory set down on the maps issued by the *Service géographique de l'armée* (1885-87), as belonging to Tunisia, and therefore subject to the French protectorate, is the same which was declared 'Tripolitan Territory' by the above-named govern-

ment establishment in 1857, and also by the *Service géographique de la marine* in 1878.

(c) That the name of Mokta given to the *uadi* Segsao by the *Service géographique de l'armée* (1885-87) was intended to justify the tracing of the boundary line along its course. In reference to this it must not be forgotten that the explorer Barth used the Arab word, Mokta, to indicate the frontier district (*Grenzgebiete*) where he had halted, to the west of the fortress of El Biban. Moreover, instead of making the Tunis-Tripoli boundary line follow the El Mokta of the present day, as was maintained in France, he located it precisely where all maps issued before the year 1885 had shown it, at El Biban.

If further proofs are wanted, the opinion of the greatest living geographer, Elisée Reclus, may be quoted, who, instead of recognising the new frontier, says on page 174 of his eleventh volume, published towards the close of the year 1886, twelve months after the *Carte des itinéraires de la Tunisie*: 'One of the little islands of the coast chain, situated between the two channels, is occupied by the small fortress of the Biban or "Doors," so named from the openings it defends. *It is also the Door of Tunisia on the Tripolitan frontier.*'

Is stronger evidence necessary? When Italy and Constantinople both protested against the new frontier as set down upon the map of the *Service géographique de l'armée*, the French government itself denied all responsibility for this map with its new boundary line, declaring it to be non-official in character.<sup>1</sup> Such a denial is a palpable absurdity,

<sup>1</sup> The French Ambassador at Constantinople declared to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that there existed no official map upon which the frontier in question was traced (December 1887).



for it is impossible to conceive of a map with a clearer title to an official character than one 'dressée, gravée et publiée par le service géographique de l'armée, étant chef du service géographique le général Perrier.'<sup>1</sup>

As may be easily imagined, Turkey has not yet recognised the new frontier. Proof of this lies in the declaration made by the Governor-General of Tripoli to the Italian Consular Agent, on November 27, 1890. 'France,' he said, 'is at present negotiating with the intention of discovering the boundary line that separates us from Tunisia. We, however, cannot enter into any such negotiations, which would signify recognition of the government of the protectorate. I have even protested against a map of the frontier compiled by the French engineer corps, which was presented to me for the necessary ratification.'

## II.

The preceding explanations would suffice to prove that the historical frontier between Tunisia and Tripoli was in the near neighbourhood of Fort Zarzis on the coast, and that, in the interior, it followed, in part at least, the course of the *uadi* Fessi. At any rate, if we accept as the ancient frontier that set down upon the French map of Prax and Renou and confirmed by Wyld, Petermann, and Reclus, that is to say the line running from the fortress of El Biban to the Duirat mountain range, bringing up at a point some seventy or seventy-five kilometres from Nalut, then the territory usurped would amount to 5000 square kilometres more or less, and this, be it observed, without reckoning

<sup>1</sup> The sheets bear this inscription on their lower margin.

what was annexed to the south of the range, of which we shall speak in due time.

But this is not the worst of the evil, for it may be urged that this land is unproductive and practically a desert. The main injury to the power reigning in Tripolitania lies in the fact that the Tunisian frontier is but thirty kilometres distant from the capital, that is to say but one short march ; and in the second place the present frontier, passing as it does, precisely where the distance between the plateau and the sea is greatest, is doubly difficult to defend. Among other disadvantages arising from the position of the new frontier the greatest is this : that the stronghold of Oezzán, in the Nafusa range, instead of serving, as was intended, as a frontier defence, occupies, since the alteration of the boundary line, an ambiguous position as regards Tripoli, inasmuch as it would be an easy matter for French troops which had been ranged along the Mokta before the outbreak of hostilities, to seize Nalut or some other place on the edge of the plateau in that region, and thus cut out Oezzán together with the whole of the frontier to the west, as far as the desert.

But although the disadvantages of the conditions we have pointed out are grave enough from a military point of view,—and it is no trifling matter when the capital of a state covering a million square kilometres, more or less, is brought still closer to its frontier to which it was already in too close proximity, and when, moreover, the enemy once in possession of Nalut and the edge of the plateau may so easily rush upon Tripoli,—these, nevertheless, are not the most serious features of the case.

A further effect of this new boundary line which,

following the eastern edge of the desert, has been made to pass within four-and-twenty kilometres of the city, is that the Oasis of Gadames is now located at the south-western extremity of the Turkish possessions, whereas formerly these possessions extended, as we have seen, to the south of the Algerian Suf, and beyond the third meridian east of Paris. Now, owing both to this location and to the Anglo-French agreement (as we shall presently see), the Oasis of Gadames has become simply an appendage of Tripolitania, being joined to her only on the east and north-east.

The removal of the frontier towards the east, by leaving the military posts of Oezzan and those on the edge of the plateau exposed, becomes a menace to the very existence of Gadames. Once in possession of Nalut, the enemy would be able to control all communication between that place and the capital, and with the French desert on the other side, Gadames might easily be taken without a blow being struck. Now the possession of this most important oasis—the ancient Cydamus of the Romans, who ruled here for two hundred and fifty years, the necessary starting-point of all caravans from Gabes and Tripoli to Lake Tsad, to Bornu or the Niger, and consequently an important commercial centre and market—the possession of this oasis, we repeat, having long been coveted by the French, we cannot fail to perceive that their ultimate and main purpose in pushing the frontier towards the east is that of disintegrating the unity of the Turkish possessions, of drawing nearer to the capital, threatening its communications with the most important oasis of all, and isolating it so thoroughly that it must, in the end, fall into their

hands. The marking of the boundary line<sup>1</sup> at a point only four-and-twenty kilometres to the north of Gadames, as we see it on the map of the *Service géographique de l'armée* (1887), plainly indicates that the French do not intend to recognise Turkish domination at any point to the west or south of the oasis. The French regard this region as a Turkish outpost isolated by the surrounding desert, to be molested, threatened, and hard pressed until, forced to succumb, the post be left open for others to occupy.

It is unnecessary to point out how serious the loss of Gadames would be to the power ruling at Tripoli, both from a commercial and a strategical point of view. In the first place, it is a thoroughfare connecting two seas—the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Guinea—with the Tsad region in the interior; in the second place, its loss would also involve that of the whole territory as far as the oases of Derji and Sinaun, which, sooner or later, would share its fate. In connection with this point it is well to bear in mind the fact that in these boundless African deserts, the waters to which the oases owe their being have made them places of capital importance, for beyond their limits there is no life. They may therefore well be termed the strategical points of the desert.

### III.

It has been hinted above that the Anglo-French agreement of August 5 was a menace to the oasis of Gadames. This agreement, in fact, recognises

<sup>1</sup> 'Ghadames située à 25 kil. à peine de la frontière *idéale* qui sépare les possessions de la France et celles de la Turquie' (Reclus, tome xi. p. 114).



the zone of French influence to the south of the Mediterranean possessions as far as a line stretching from Say on the Niger to Borruva on Lake Tsad, and this without indicating in any way the eastern boundary of this immense tract. This may be established only by uniting the extreme eastern point of the boundary of the Mediterranean possessions with Borruva on Lake Tsad, taking care to leave intact on the east, those claims which, by virtue of Waddington's declaration in compliance with Lord Salisbury's request (August 5), were granted to the Porte.

Thus the line would become a continuation of that which skirts the oasis of Gadames, and which, passing to the west of the oasis of Ghat (or Rhat), which also belongs to Tripolitania, should lead directly to Borruva.

Now when we reflect that we are in the heart of the Sahara, surrounded on all sides by vast reaches possessing but few arteries of communication and still fewer inhabited centres, that is to say oases; that consequently news from the interior takes months to reach the coast, if indeed it reach it at all; that, thanks to the agreement, the French have the right to establish themselves on the western shore of Lake Tsad; that they have declared the south-eastern boundary of their Mediterranean possessions to pass the city of Gadames at a distance of only four-and-twenty kilometres; that Turkey has not found strength to oppose this, Turkey, who is the first to suffer, and who is thus preparing herself to accept the loss of Gadames or at least, as a prelude to its loss, to submit to the deflection to French ports of the trade that should pass through Tripoli; that finally, the distant oasis

of Rhat is certainly not under the direct control of the *Vali* of Tripoli; when, we repeat, all these points have been considered, it may well be asked: what is easier than for the French to become, little by little, the real arbiters if not the direct masters of Gadames and Rhat, and consequently of the entire *Hinterland* of Tripoli? For it must be remembered that in desert regions like this the real master is he who is on the spot and equipped with sufficient force and money to control commerce and the main thoroughfares; and furthermore, that the supplementary declaration to the agreement of August 5 guarantees the Sultan's rights only, and it is very doubtful whether those claims which have arisen in consequence of the very recent *Hinterland* theory are understood as coming under this head. There is, indeed, reason to believe that it is intended to safeguard only those rights to territory recognised as forming an integral part of Tripolitania, so that, even if we admit willingness on the part of France to respect those other rights—concerning Gadames and Rhat—no explicit guarantee is to be found either in the agreement or in the supplementary declaration which might serve to check the slow, peaceful, but constant march of France towards the east, in which direction, if she but keep to the south of Tripolitania, she is to-day free to advance without encountering any boundary line.

#### CONCLUSION

As has been seen, France actually abolished the ancient frontier between Algeria and Tripolitania (see map by Prax and Renou) long before the signing of the agreement of August 5, 1890, declaring

the entire desert region to the west of Gadames and to the south of the Algerian Suf to be French. It has furthermore been shown that, at the expense of Tripoli, she arbitrarily moved the frontier of the Tunisian Regency farther eastwards for the purpose of drawing nearer to the capital, surrounding the defences on the plateau to the south-west, and cutting off Gadames.

This work of gradual destruction was begun by the French as soon as they set foot in Tunisia, and is still going on. To-day their aim is Gadames. Up to the present the region has merely been drawn within the circle of French commerce, but it will of necessity fall into the hands of France at last, and with it will go the oases of Derji and Sinaun, and the distant region of Rhat. But how about the balance of power in the Mediterranean when France shall have become arbiter of the entire *Hinterland* of Tripoli, mistress of the great caravan ways from Tsad to Tripoli, and, consequently, of all the commerce of that vast Central African basin? Turkish domination, reduced to the coast region, will become, little by little, but a semblance of rule in Tripoli itself, so that, on the first favourable occasion, that country will become the easy prey of the Power which already presses her on the west and south, and will end by dominating her entirely. Thus the uninterrupted dominion of France will stretch from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to Lake Tsad, across a vast territory amounting in area to nearly one-third of the whole continent of Africa. Mistress of the coast from Morocco to Egypt, she will have upset the balance of power in the Mediterranean; once mistress of the vast country between the two seas and the central basin of the

Tsad, she will eventually reach Uadai, Darfur, and the Nile valley.

ROME, 3 December, 1890.

(Signed) GENERAL L. DAL VERME.

Considering what had already transpired, it was but natural that the Roman Foreign Office should look upon all news from the Tunis-Tripoli frontier as important. The memory of the manner in which France had initiated the occupation of the Tunisian Regency justified the fear that any frontier incident, however insignificant in appearance, might furnish a pretext for the invasion of Tripolitan territory. On July 31 Crispi telegraphed as follows to the embassies in London, Berlin, and Vienna:—

Our Consul at Tunis telegraphs me news of a serious encounter between Tripolitan and Tunisian tribes on the Tripoli frontier.

I trust this is not a repetition of the Kroumir fable, which served as a pretext for the occupation of Tunis in 1881. It would now appear to be the turn of Tripolitania.

At about this time the negotiations between the Cabinets of Paris and London for establishing the zones of French and English influence in the Sudan came to a close, and the Anglo-French agreement, dated August 5, 1890, to which frequent allusion has been made in the preceding pages, was signed.

Both the French and English ministers, Ribot and Lord Salisbury, declared that Turkish rights had been respected by the terms of the agreement, but in reality the *Hinterland* of Tripoli was given over to French invasion, as General Dal Verme so clearly demonstrated, in the memorial we have transcribed.

On August 2, and previous to the signing of the agreement, Crispi had despatched the following telegram to London:—

I have, on several occasions, notified the embassy



at London of encroachments made or attempted by France on the frontier between Tunis and Tripoli.

I now feel bound to inform the embassy that, in the course of an interview concerning this matter which took place on July 31 between Minister Ribot and General Menabrea, Ribot declared that France includes in her claim to the *Hinterland* the great caravan way that unites the Sudan with Tripoli. France would thus come into possession of nearly the whole of the Tripoli *Hinterland*, and the province would lose all chance of future development.

The attention of the Foreign Office must be called to this matter.

On the morrow Count Tornielli telegraphed the following reply :—

Whenever the Ministry at Rome has seen fit to warn this embassy of fresh encroachments upon Tripoli, or of acts tending to prepare the way for expansion at the expense of that Turkish province, I have always made a point of mentioning the matter at the Foreign Office, also leaving a list of the names of the localities in question. I have furthermore reported to Your Excellency concerning these communications and their reception. Probably my telegram despatched yesterday at 8 P.M. had not arrived when Your Excellency telegraphed concerning the claims which Ribot acknowledged to Menabrea during their interview of July 31. Salisbury's statements to me with regard to the Tripoli *Hinterland* are to the effect that the agreement in question permits France to advance only as far as the western shore of Lake Tsad. His Lordship explicitly declared that all of

the Sultan's rights have been safeguarded. As negotiations were still in progress yesterday afternoon, and as Lord Salisbury has gone into the country for three days, I am sending him a private communication to-day, to warn him that Ribot's claims tend to place France in possession of the great caravan roads of the Sudan, which, under certain circumstances, by facilitating secret operations against other parts of Africa, may prove of supreme importance and advantage to the State which holds Algeria and Tunis. His Lordship will readily understand the allusion to Upper Egypt, and unless some positive obligations have already been assumed, I am convinced he will make every effort to prevent the thoroughfares in question from falling into the hands of France.

These fresh anxieties on the part of the Italian government, like those which had preceded them, were naturally communicated to Constantinople. In October the Sublime Porte finally decided to take some steps in the matter, and the following note was despatched to the Turkish ambassadors at Paris and London :—

October, 1890.

*The Sublime Porte to its Representatives in Paris and London.*<sup>1</sup>

Your Excellency is aware that in signing the agreement concerning Africa drawn up between them on the fifth of last August, the British and French governments exchanged notes establishing their mutual intention of scrupulously respecting His Imperial Majesty the Sultan's rights to the south of the provinces forming his Tripolitan possessions.

This notwithstanding, and in order to prevent

<sup>1</sup> From the original French.

any misunderstanding, the Imperial Government feels bound to declare that, in the south of Tripoli, towards the Great Sahara, besides the districts of Gadames, Rhah Argar (Asdser), Touareg, Murzuk (capital of Tsezzen), Ghatroun, Tidjerri and their dependencies, which are all administered by the Imperial Authorities, the rights of the Empire must, by virtue of ancient titles as well as by the theory of the *Hinterland* itself, be understood as extending over the territories contained within the zone outlined below. The line of this zone, starting at a point known as Bin Turki to the north-east of Berresok near the southern frontier of Tunis, descends towards Bornu passing to the west of Ghadames and Argar Touareg, and encircling the oases of Djebado and Agram. It then passes within the boundaries of Sokoto and Bornu, bringing up at the northern frontier of Cameroon, whence it follows, in an easterly direction, the line of the watershed between the basins of the Congo and the Tsad, in such a way as to encircle the territories of Bornu, Baghirim, Ouardai, Kanem, Ouanianga, Borkou, and Tibesti, thus leaving us in possession of the great caravan way leading from Murzuk to Kouka past the oases of Yat, Kaouar, and Agadem.

Your Excellency will see from the above description of the line that the Barrowa region on Lake Tsad remains within the sphere of action of the Imperial Government.

The main arguments in favour of our point of view are derived from the fact that, as the caravan way from Murzuk to Kouka must of necessity remain in the possession of the Empire, the above-named Barrowa region through which this thorough-

fare passes, and which is in the neighbourhood of Kouka, cannot be left in the hands of others.

It is a fact that Article II. of the Anglo-French declaration of August 5 would appear to include Barrowa (on Lake Tsad) within the zone of French influence, but besides the twofold consideration that this region, as far as we are aware, has never belonged to any Power, and that geographically as well as by virtue of the *Hinterland* theory, instead of forming part of the French zone it should, for the reasons exposed above, belong to the Empire, it will be well not to lose sight of the fact that the text of the article in question states in its second alignment that the boundary is to be traced in such a manner as to bring within the zone of action of the Niger Company everything belonging by right to the kingdom of Sokoto. Now, as the line skirts Sokoto without touching it, and encircles Bornu only, and as, moreover, Bornu is some distance this side of Sokoto, we are justified in assuming that no well-founded objections can be raised against the line traced.

I beg Your Excellency to communicate the contents of the above (in writing) to the government to which you are accredited, in order that when the line to be traced is determined, according to Article II. above mentioned, there may be no encroachment upon our zone of influence. Your Excellency is furthermore requested to keep my department informed concerning future phases of this question, and the result of your action. SAID.

Italy's zeal in defending the integrity of Tripolitania excited some suspicion at Constantinople, which was kept alive by the French press and agents who, in order to distract the attention of the Turkish government from the ceaseless



activity of France, were continually prating of Italy's intentions. On August 14 the Sultan caused the following telegram to be sent to Zia Bey, Turkish Ambassador at Rome :—

A private despatch announces that Italy is preparing a military expedition. Although this news appears highly improbable, you are nevertheless requested to forward further information.

Zia Bey immediately replied that there was nothing to indicate that a military expedition was in course of preparation.

In November the French papers stated that at the interview between Crispi and Caprivi at Milan, arrangements had been made for the occupation of Tripoli by Italy. The Turkish Ambassador at Berlin, who was immediately requested to assume information on this point, telegraphed as follows :—

I have had an interview with Baron Marschall. His Excellency informs me that the Chancellor derived the best of impressions from his interview with Signor Crispi. He furthermore added that the Sublime Porte need attach no importance to lying rumours concerning Tripoli, as the name of that province of the Ottoman Empire was not once mentioned during the interview.

But suspicion was thoroughly aroused. On December 15 Zia Bey telegraphed to his government :—

The military attaché, Osman Bey, has learned from a reliable source that Colonel Ponza di San Martino has started for Tunis and Tripoli to secretly investigate the report of an encounter between the Imperial and French troops, and to ascertain what means of defence Turkey possesses in Tripolitania. As I have denied the report of this encounter, both in print and during my interviews with His Excellency Crispi, I am of opinion that Colonel

Ponza di San Martino's mission is rather to ascertain how much foundation there is for the tales of French usurpations voiced by His Excellency Crispi on the authority of communications from the Italian Consul, who would appear to have made a special study of the Tunisian *Hinterland*.

Fully alive to the danger of appropriation of the Tripoli *Hinterland* by France, which the situation created by the agreement of August 5, 1890, had greatly facilitated, the Italian government immediately sought a means of frustrating any such attempt, and the Memorial, dated January 19, 1891, which we transcribe below, clearly shows that such a means was speedily found. A few days later, however, a crisis in the Ministry removed Crispi from office, and the question was neglected by his successors.

(Memorial.) In seeking a means of improving the situation it is necessary to carefully examine the Anglo-French agreement, which, both by what it has established and, still more, by what it has omitted to establish, is alone responsible for this situation.

By the terms of the agreement France is, as a matter of fact, left perfectly free to push forward as far as Borruva on Lake Tsad, which is much farther eastward than would have been allowed by an impartial application of the *Hinterland* theory. On the other hand, this same agreement has omitted to fix the eastern limit of the zone of French influence, thus leaving the field open to arbitrary interpretations and to consequent usurpations in the future.

To whomsoever examines a map of the African continent upon which the recent political frontiers have been traced, it must be evident that the extension of the zone of French influence as far as the Tsad exceeds the limit which a just application of

the new theory would sanction. As a rule—save when the presence of a river makes it preferable to follow its course—the *Hinterland* frontier between two neighbouring powers is determined by a line following the general outline of the coast. Now, if we prolong the actual boundary line between Tunis and Tripoli, which does, on the whole, follow the general outline of the coast (the very boundary which France desires), we shall see that the new line should run in a south-westerly or rather a south-south-westerly direction, thus granting the Tripoli *Hinterland* a vast tract of Sahara, which is to-day assigned to France.

Such a division, however, although conforming to the general rule as far as the coast from Gabes to Tripoli is concerned, would not be just as regards the shore-line of Algeria, nor could it be so considered for various other more complex reasons, because, as prominent points are rare in the vast region in question, these, rather than the area of territory, should be equitably divided between the contendents. Justice, therefore, would demand that the dividing line be made to run *directly southwards* along the meridian, thus bringing France into contact with the Sokoto frontier from the Niger to Bornu, and Tripoli into contact with that of Bornu and with Lake Tsad.

Instead of this, the agreement of August 5 has allowed France to advance much farther eastwards, so that she alone skirts the frontier of Bornu to the exclusion of Tripoli, which had a right to an outlet here, both for geographical reasons founded, as we have shown, on the new laws of the *Hinterland*, and for reasons of commerce, Bornu having for centuries trafficked through Gadames and Tripoli, and this

to such an extent that Tripoli may be said to have monopolised the commerce of this region. The agreement of August 5 has, moreover, brought France to the shores of Lake Tsad, which lay entirely within the *Hinterland* of the Tripoli possessions. Nor must the fact be ignored that to have allowed France to reach the lake means to have granted her 200,000 square geographical miles to the east of the meridian which should have marked the boundary, all this territory being situated not to the *south* of the Mediterranean possessions, as stipulated by the letter of the agreement, but to the *south-east*.

But, as if that portion were not enough which we have seen allotted to France with so little regard for justice, that country is now seeking, by means of maps, newspaper articles, and lectures, to convince the public that the zone of French influence extends to the south of Tripolitania so as to include the greater part of the caravan way leading from Tripoli past Murzuk to Lake Tsad, as well as the oasis of Bilma and practically the entire northern shore of the lake. The maps published last December by the *Temps* and the *Petit Journal*, only five short months after the date of the agreement, state this clearly enough, and not only are they at liberty to make this statement, but the public is justified in accepting it, for two extreme points only are established by the terms of the agreement as limiting the zone of French influence on the east, one of these points, moreover, being but vaguely determined, thus, as already stated, leaving a vast field exposed to various conflicting interpretations, which cannot fail to lead to further arbitrary occupation.

Nor can the declarations made by Monsieur



Waddington to Lord Salisbury on August 6 be considered as clearly defining the boundary by guaranteeing the Sultan's rights, for the Minister of Foreign affairs simply declares that those rights are to be respected 'qui peuvent appartenir à S.M.I. le Sultan dans les régions situées *sur la frontière* de ses possessions tripolitaines'; which by no means implies the guaranteeing of any rights in the regions forming the *Hinterland* of the Turkish possessions; for had this been meant, the passage—very different in substance although but slightly altered in form—would have read: 'les régions situées *au sud de la frontière* méridionale de ses provinces tripolitaines.'

The passage thus worded would have excluded the possibility of any further usurpations on the part of France to the south of Tripoli, beginning with Gadames, whereas, as it now stands in the diplomatic document, the passage guarantees nothing save what lies upon the *Tripolitan frontier*, which may even be made to signify only what is upon *Turkish territory* along the frontier.

Is it too late to discover a remedy for the situation created by this incomplete agreement of August 5, a situation injurious (as the preceding Memorial has proved) to Italy, to England, and to those central powers who are interested in maintaining the balance of power in the Mediterranean?

The remedy is a simple one, for it is not a question of undoing what has already been concluded, but of elucidating and delineating it. Moreover, France would only be required to ratify in all particulars what, through her Minister of Foreign Affairs, she has repeatedly declared was her interpretation, an interpretation coinciding with our own. Nothing

more would be demanded, save a supplementary declaration by the French Minister in confirmation of his statements of August 6, and clearly outlining the eastern boundary of the zone of French influence, which the agreement of August 5 failed to do.

For this purpose it would suffice to declare that the eastern boundary of this zone (which has been but imperfectly established by the points forming its extreme limits) shall be determined by a line which, starting from the Tunis-Tripoli frontier to the west of the oasis of Gadames, shall lead directly to the oasis of Ghat, skirting it on the west, and thence making in a straight line for Borruva on Lake Tsad.

The fairness of a division such as this could not be questioned, for the agreement of August 5 contains the phrase: 'la zone d'influence de la France au sud de ses possessions méditerranéennes.' Now, as the extreme inland limit on the east of those possessions is situated (if we accept the boundary set down on the map of the *Service géographique de l'armée*) at the western edge of the oasis of Gadames, the line to Borruva, specially mentioned in the agreement, must start from that point; which line should hold a straight course unless it be found to encroach upon the oasis of Ghat belonging to Turkey; but if, on reaching that oasis, it be found that the geographical position of the line makes this necessary, it must be broken.

The precise delineation of such a line would immediately render any arbitrary interpretation impossible; the Sultan's rights in the southern parts of his possessions would be effectually safeguarded, and all encroachment on the part of France on the east would be made impossible. France would, moreover, have no reason to complain of this final

partition, which represents, in the main, that to which she consented by the agreement of August 5, through which, we repeat, the government of the Republic has obtained, at Tripoli's expense, far more than would have been allotted to her by a just application of the new *Hinterland* theory.

How the question was being dealt with in Paris may be seen from the following despatches from General Menabrea.

### I.

PARIS, January 3, 1891.

*To the Prime Minister.*

My last interview with Monsieur Ribot, which took place at his weekly reception on December 30, was a heated, not to say violent one! At the very outset he alluded in hostile language to the debate concerning the Tripoli question, wherein France is accused of harbouring the intention of occupying that Regency, an accusation maintained by our so-called official Press, which is supposed to be inspired by the Italian Ministry. I gathered that he concludes, from reports which have reached him, that Your Excellency has warned England and other Powers of this intention on the part of France. Monsieur Ribot finally ended with a request that Your Excellency refrain from further accusations of this sort, which might lead to parliamentary interpellations and other unpleasant incidents.

I listened with calm attention to Monsieur Ribot's heated remarks, which amounted to nothing more than a protest against the accusation that France wishes to annex Tripoli, whereas she is, he declared, simply seeking to avail herself of the advantages afforded by the Anglo-French convention concerning the *Hinterland* in the Sudan, and bring part of the

trade of that region through Tunisia, where fresh measures for facilitating it are being adopted.

When my opportunity arrived I informed Monsieur Ribot that the censure he had just expressed as regards our attitude towards France in the Tripoli question might, with far more reason, be pronounced against himself or rather against his Ministry, for not a day passes but abuse is heaped upon Italy and her Prime Minister by that part of the French press which is known to be connected with the Foreign Office, and which persists in accusing us of the intention of occupying Tripoli, whereas it is well known that such is not the case. We are aware, moreover, that a French admiral, Monsieur Duperré, who recently visited Constantinople and was granted an audience by the Sultan, used that opportunity to fill the Sovereign's mind with deep mistrust of us as regards Tripoli. I added that I was unaware whether or no Your Excellency had made any communications to other powers concerning the Regency, but that, in any case, we certainly had a right to call the attention of others to a matter of great importance to us, as it must be to any country having interests at stake in the Mediterranean, and consequently anxious that the balance of power in that sea be not disturbed for the benefit of invaders. But to Italy more than to any other country the question is of importance, and France must make up her mind once for all to recognise the fact that Italy is now a nation of thirty-two million souls, two hundred thousand of whom are entered upon the lists of seafaring men, and that we hold six thousand or more kilometres of Mediterranean coast. Therefore, although she may not aspire to possess Tripoli, it is but natural that Italy should look askance upon a



neighbouring power already in the habit of calling the Mediterranean a *French lake*, and which, by means of a futile pretext, took possession of Tunis, in deed if not in name, and is now, by a gradual process of absorption, and under pretext of a protectorate, identifying that country with France to such an extent that the Bey has lost all liberty of action, even that of writing and despatching a letter without the permission of the French Resident.

Any power, therefore, attempting to appropriate Tripolitania must be prepared to encounter serious opposition on the part of other powers which have interests to protect. I declared that I was not endeavouring to justify the language of the Press, but that, as we have never sought to make Monsieur Ribot responsible for all the absurdities and misrepresentations of those French journals which proclaim themselves the official organs of his Ministry—amongst which the *Siècle* takes the lead, being now under the direction of an ex-functionary of this Foreign Office, whose name still figures on the pages of the French diplomatic year-book—we feel that it is unfair to make Your Excellency responsible for the lucubrations in which our Press indulges concerning France.

I moreover declared that a false idea of Your Excellency's political attitude prevails in France. You are looked upon as the representative of a *faction*, whereas the results of the elections have shown that you represent the general opinion of the country. Although a native of Sicily, that most southerly portion of Italy, you have, nevertheless, achieved your most signal victories in the extreme north, in Turin, the capital of that Piedmont which was willing to relinquish her supremacy for the sake

of Italian unity. After fighting at Garibaldi's side and suffering exile, Your Excellency joined the Great Leader in acclaiming in the Monarchy of the House of Savoy the instrument that should consolidate and maintain the independence and unity of Italy. The political and civil courage which Your Excellency has displayed prove that you have ever had this lofty, two-fold purpose in view, when defending our alliances as when reducing the various governments—the heritage of those States which once divided our nation—to a uniform system, and abolishing the manifold abuses by which many of them were corrupted.

I brought this digression to a close by remarking that the journalists themselves should be held responsible for their statements, and not the heads of government, who are not infrequently the victims of their subordinates.

Towards the close of our conversation Monsieur Ribot alluded to the boundary line between our respective territories near Assab and Obock. I replied that it rested entirely with him to resume negotiations by accepting the basis established by Your Excellency, from which it was impossible for you to recede. I added that, by opposing to these conditions certain antiquated treaties already annulled by prescription, and certain more recent contracts concluded with petty vassals of the Negus, his Ministry would appear as seeking to repeat the *jugglery that was arranged for Massowah*.

One venture of that sort was enough, I said, especially now that a legally constituted sovereign of that region has accepted our protective alliance; and I ended by declaring that, with slight concessions on the part of France, this question might be easily settled.

Throughout this long discussion I was careful to speak with much firmness and precision, but without overstepping the bounds of the greatest courtesy. The interview, therefore, ended peacefully, and we shook hands.

*His Majesty's Ambassador,*  
MENABREA.

## II.

PARIS, *January 13, 1891.*

*To the Prime Minister.*

After my interview with Monsieur Ribot, concerning which I forwarded a report (January 3, No. 24-7) to the Roman Ministry, I gave my especial attention to the study of the map of Africa, recently published by the *Temps*, which forms the object of Your Excellency's despatch, quoted on the margin.

I note that the outline of the *Hinterland* between the zones of French and English influence in the region forming the Sudan to the north of Tunis and Algeria, on the one hand, and of Tripoli on the other, does not correspond in all particulars with that established by the Anglo-French agreement of the fifth of last August. The boundary line, in fact, touched only one point on the western shore of Lake Tsad, at Borruva, whence the coast bends northward, whereas this new map continues the reddish line along the whole northern shore, broadening it as if to indicate an extension of French influence. This same reddish tint spreads over the oases of Rhat and Gadames which belong within the Tripoli region. The vague outline is intended to suggest a direction, and whet an appetite for the future extension of protectorate, an appetite easily aroused in France, where public opinion, not content

with the several territories over which that country already exercises a more or less firmly established and indisputable authority, aspires to the amplification of dominion in northern Africa, and is preparing various enterprises by means of which it is proposed to turn the not unimportant stream of Sudanese commerce towards Tunisia. One party has Lake Tsad in view, which is regarded as the great inland port of that region. These tendencies explain the language used by Monsieur Ribot on the occasion of his weekly reception of December 30 (see report above mentioned). While protesting against the accusation that France intends to invade Tripoli, he nevertheless admits that she is determined to make the most of the region left open to French influence in the Sudan, by attracting Sudanese commerce to Tunis and Algeria.

Now the oases of Rhat and Gadames are the principal stopping-places of the caravans. Gadames especially may be considered as the *strategical* point, dominating the traffic of the two main roads, one leading to Tunis the other to Tripoli. If this latter Regency is to be saved from speedy subjection to a French protectorate and the consequent definite annexation of Tunis to Algiers prevented, it is absolutely essential that the two oases, and especially Gadames, be preserved from falling into the hands of the French. Pretexts for the occupation of Gadames would certainly not be wanting; the Kroumirs have not all disappeared, even now; to prevent their rising again and furnishing France with an opportunity of taking possession of the above-named oases, it would be necessary for the Sultan to send troops to protect these regions. A small garrison would be sufficient; the sight of the



Ottoman flag would suffice to check those vain aspirations which are attributed to France. The Turkish troops, however, should be sufficiently numerous to resist possible attacks by followers of the Mahdi.

The all-important interests which she has at stake make it even more necessary for England than for Italy to prevent Sudanese trade from being monopolised by a Power which already holds a large share of the African coast on the Mediterranean. I am therefore of opinion that England more especially, and with her Italy, should in some way further the proposed Turkish occupation, if necessary by furnishing a subsidy for its maintenance. Support of this sort from Italy would have the effect of dispelling the suspicions which have been aroused in the Sultan's mind concerning our attitude towards Tripoli, and would also enable us, by strengthening our position in Asia Minor, to overcome the opposition which our language, our institutions, and our trade have encountered in the hostile competition of the French.

If, instead, Rhat and more especially Gadames are to remain at the mercy of France, let us, at least, not allow ourselves to be taken unawares, as was the case with Tunis. Let us rather prepare to oppose the establishment of French domination in Tripolitania by every means at our disposal, which establishment might possibly mean *Finis Italie*, at least as a maritime power of the first class.

I will close this report by pointing out the necessity that His Majesty's Government should establish a clear understanding with England concerning the above-named possibility. Should England decline to co-operate, I am of opinion that Italy would be

fully justified in adopting further independent measures, and in negotiating directly with the Turkish government.

*His Majesty's Ambassador,*  
L. F. MENABREA.

*P.S.*—The proposed arrangement concerning the oasis of Gadames may be termed a peaceful solution of the problem; nevertheless it might be wise to consider the occupation of Tripoli by Italy, which Power, after Turkey, is the best fitted to assume the protectorate of that Regency. Such a solution might, however, give rise to an armed conflict, with regard to the consequences and expediency of which it is not my place to express an opinion.

L. F. M.

Informed of these French intrigings, the Berlin Cabinet lent its support to the position assumed by Italy, both at Paris and in London. The following telegram was despatched on January 21 :—

BERLIN, *January 21, 1891.*

On the occasion of his recent visit here, Count von Münster was again instructed to discuss the question of Tripoli and the Tunisian frontier with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs. Last night the Ambassador telegraphed that Ribot had categorically declared to him that Italian apprehensions with regard to Tripoli are entirely without foundation, and that the reports now circulating concerning this matter are all false. France has not despatched a single soldier in that direction, nor does she intend to intercept the caravans from the Sahara. The Minister admitted that the frontier between Tunis and Tripoli is ill defined, but added that, in order to avoid all contention, it would be advisable not to

attempt to establish it more definitely. He has no intention of creating difficulties for Italy, and if he had he would not choose either Tripoli or the neighbouring desert for the purpose, when Abyssinia offers a far more favourable field for such operations. In order to dispel Italy's apprehensions, he himself has provoked an interpellation at the Chamber to which he will reply to-morrow. Although Count Münster was also instructed to discuss the question of Biserta, he does not allude to it in his despatch. He may have deemed it wiser to refrain from mentioning it after the French Minister's declarations (whatever their value may be), or he may have reserved this point for a future interview. Meanwhile the Secretary of State lends great importance to the fact that the French government has been forced, by this diplomatic intervention on the part of Germany, to recognise that this country is carefully watching the French policy in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Ribot's explanations at the Chamber of Deputies to-morrow, will bind France, to a certain extent. Count Hatzfeld has also received instructions to discuss the matter with Lord Salisbury, who is watching the action of the Republic in these regions with the keenest attention, but who does not feel that the time has arrived for him to assume a more determined attitude.

The support of public opinion, which can only be roused by more convincing proofs of French intentions, would be necessary for this purpose.

LAUNAY.

The Tripoli question came up for discussion in the French Chamber on January 22. Monsieur Pichon, who later on became Minister of Foreign Affairs, brought forward the inter-

pellation 'on the rumours circulated by the Italian press, official and otherwise, concerning the intentions of France with regard to Tripolitania.'

Menabrea's first despatch stated that Pichon 'expressed warm regard for Italy, that *smiling expression of Latin civilisation*,<sup>1</sup> and said that he trusted the true feeling of the Republic for Italy would soon be made manifest, and those insinuations disproved which, he believed, had been set afoot for the sole purpose of rendering the Triple Alliance more popular in Italy.' Ribot replied 'with a brief allusion to his previous declarations concerning the cordial relations existing between France and the Porte, and added that the campaign upon which the Italian press had embarked need cause the government no uneasiness, especially after the explicit declarations made by Your Excellency in your speech at Florence. The attitude of the Chamber throughout the discussion was, on the whole, a friendly one.'

But General Menabrea, who had probably not been present at the session in question, but had simply read the official reports of the two orators' remarks, gave a different opinion of them in subsequent telegrams.

(Telegram from Menabrea.)

PARIS, 23 January, 1891.

It is clearly apparent that the scene which took place yesterday at the Chamber between Ribot and Pichon was prearranged, for Pichon simply reiterated the statements Ribot had made to me on several different occasions.

This morning the *Journal des Débats* devotes a long article, of manifestly ministerial origin, to this discussion.

French aspirations with regard to Tripoli having

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to France in his address delivered in Florence (8 October, 1890), the Hon. Crispi had said: '... no one imagines nor could any one possibly imagine a Europe deprived of the influence of France—that most genial and smiling expression of modern civilisation. . . .' The ironical intention of the phrase pronounced by Pichon, 'that smiling expression of Latin civilisation,' is evident.



encountered marked opposition on the part of several of the great Powers, the ironical reply was intended to deceive public opinion concerning this government's intentions, which are practically paralysed for the time being. But such language will fail to deceive the thinking public. We have only to recall how France acted with regard to Tunisia. As yet she has been unable to find the necessary Kroumirs for Tripoli, and the government is simply seeking to hide its chagrin by ridiculing Italy.

I have not yet seen the Stefani telegram to which Your Excellency refers.

(Second Telegram from Menabrea.)

(Private.)

PARIS, 23 January, 1891.

Here is the official text of the only sarcastic phrases Ribot's short address contained. 'As for this campaign to which Monsieur Pichon has just alluded and all these newspaper articles, which, owing to their frequency and similarity, cannot fail to attract attention, we are perhaps doing them too much honour in considering them here. The French government has no reason to complain of these articles, but rather should the Italian government be displeased with them, for the Hon. Crispi himself, in an address which you have certainly not forgotten, declared that he desired to preserve the friendship of France.'

Monsieur Pichon's sarcasm was even more direct. At a certain point when, in proclaiming his warm friendship for Italy, he called that country the 'smiling expression of Latin civilisation,' he actually appeared to be ridiculing the language used by Your Excellency in Florence.

When, on the twenty-second, the Hon. Crispi received a telegraphic report through the Stefani, of Pichon's interpellation and Minister Ribot's reply, he was immediately struck by its tone of sarcasm, and despatched a protest to Menabrea against this discourteous demonstration. On the twenty-sixth he telegraphed to him as follows:—

(Confidential.)

Monsieur Billot attended my weekly reception yesterday. After discussing some unimportant matters he attempted to find out what I thought of Monsieur Pichon's interpellation. I begged him repeatedly not to dwell upon this regrettable incident, but as he persisted, I said: 'You French are fond of making a display of your wit, and Monsieur Pichon simply made Italy his butt, while Monsieur Ribot took me for his.' Hereupon the Ambassador attempted to excuse his Minister, observing that I was perhaps not acquainted with the exact words used. I replied by showing him that I was in possession of the official report, and once more begged him to drop the subject. As he failed to comply with my request, I said: 'Well then, as a man, I feel myself your Monsieur Ribot's superior, for I have done more for the cause of liberty than he has ever dreamed of: as a minister, I feel myself his equal, and therefore I have a right to his respect.' Monsieur Billot protested that this was only my Italian susceptibility. 'No,' I retorted, 'it is the result of the French attitude, especially as the interpellation was prearranged between Monsieur Ribot and Monsieur Pichon. I can understand a minister's overstepping the mark in an impromptu address, but not when his speech has been prepared beforehand.'

Monsieur Billot was at a loss for an answer, and, simply to change the subject, I inquired for Monsieur

Desmarest and others. Thus, as usual, the discussion was brought to a friendly conclusion.

I have reported this incident to Your Excellency for your own personal enlightenment, and not with the intention that you should mention it to Ribot.

CRISPI.

Frontier incidents such as military explorations in the Tripoli *Hinterland* were of frequent occurrence in the years that followed. The Turkish authorities either allowed the French to act without offering opposition, or made some weak show of hindering them. At the beginning of the year 1894, when Crispi returned to power, France had already expanded her vast African domain at Tripoli's expense, and while obstinately and silently disregarding Turkey's weak protests, was preventing travellers other than French from penetrating into the interior,<sup>1</sup> in order to avoid the confirmation of rumours which had already begun to circulate in Tripoli, of fresh encroachments, upon Kuka in April, the oases of Gadames and Ghat in June, and later, upon Zuara and the Bay of El Biban, beyond which the shore boundary had been pushed.

When Crispi could again renew his protests, and exhort the Powers to take diplomatic action for the future preservation of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, he found England indifferent and Germany and Austria unenthusiastic. On April 4 Ambassador Tornielli telegraphed as follows :—

Lord Kimberley has as yet received no confirmation of the occupation of Kuka, but he has no doubt the French are firmly determined to reach Bar-el-Ghazal. I inquired if, in his opinion, Turkey had no voice in the matter, but he would not commit himself. I believe that, although it is felt here that France will never be able to permanently hold a country so vast, the advance towards the Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> The Italian traveller Sebastiano Martini, who proposed leaving Gabes in January 1894 for the south of Tripoli, was forbidden to start by the French authorities.

Sudan is nevertheless causing the government much anxiety.

Ambassador Collobiano communicated from Constantinople :

Since the unsuccessful negotiations which were carried on in 1890, the Sublime Porte appears to have lost all interest in the question of the Tripoli Hinterland.

The firmness and activity displayed by France in extending her African dominions were really astonishing. Her colonial officers and functionaries were most enthusiastic, and would have liked to see the French flag floating over the whole of Africa; nor did the government at Paris allow any opposition to damp its spirit of enterprise. On February 4, 1894, an agreement was concluded between France and Germany for the purpose of establishing the boundary line between Cameroon and the Congo region, which line, starting from the point where the river Campo intersects the fifteenth meridian east of Greenwich, and holding a wavering course as far as the tenth degree of longitude north, ran thence by the *Thalweg* of the Sciari as far as Lake Tsad.

By means of this arrangement France succeeded in uniting her Congo possessions with the *Hinterland* which England had recognised as her property in 1890, and which extended from Tunisia and Algeria as far as Lake Tsad. The shores of that lake, stretching towards the right from the mouth of the Sciari to Barruva (the Anglo-French frontier), had now become practically French, while towards the east, the only check to expansion which France had to fear was that which might come from England should an attempt be made to penetrate into the Nile basin.<sup>1</sup> It now appeared inevitable that the

<sup>1</sup> France attempted to obtain a footing in the Upper Nile Valley between 1895 and 1898. Being unable to drive England out of Egypt, she sought cautiously and by slow degrees to draw nearer to the Egyptian Sudan. The English government at once perceived the intentions of France, and did not hesitate to declare, through Sir Edward Grey (House of Commons, 28 March, 1895), that a French expedition into the Nile Valley would be regarded as an 'unfriendly act.' Nevertheless, while Hanotaux was French Minister of Foreign Affairs, a secret mission was entrusted to Captain Marchand to push forward as far as Fashoda, the capital of Bar-el-Ghazal, and to plant the French



whole *Hinterland* of Tripoli should fall into the hands of France, and although England had safeguarded the rights of the Porte in the agreement of 1890, it was nevertheless expected that neither England nor Turkey would offer any resistance if, having made herself mistress of the Wadai and Baghirmi, France should advance towards the southern boundary of Tripoli.

To give an idea of French activity in appropriating territory, we transcribe two memoranda which the Colonial Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs forwarded to Crispi in June 1894 and June 1895.

(First Memorandum.)

In his communication of June 2, His Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli reports concerning an article which recently appeared in the French paper called *La Dépêche Tunisienne* on May 26, in which, acting upon the suggestion of the *Journal des Débats*, the immediate occupation by France of the oases of Gadames and Ghat is recommended. In another report, dated June 3, *Cavaliere Grande* says

flag there. Marchand reached his destination on July 10, 1898, but on September 19 the English also appeared before Fashoda and ordered Marchand to withdraw. When an order to the same effect reached him from Paris, the valiant officer was obliged to obey.

Although continuing to maintain that her rights had been encroached upon, France yielded to the force of circumstances, for England was determined to have her way.

Hanotaux, who had already been replaced by Delcassé when this incident was brought to a close so painful to French pride, published a volume later on, entitled *Le Partage de l'Afrique: Fachoda*, in which he set forth the reasons which, in his opinion, justified the conduct of France, and wherein he complained that public opinion in his country had not encouraged the government to resist.

' . . . British imperialism,' he says, 'blazed out at all points . . . it took up its position in anticipation of a rupture, and loosed the spectre of war. Public opinion in France was not strong enough to act as a check upon this intense enthusiasm . . . ; a veritable panic swept all before it; this panic, fanned by every means at England's disposal, and swelled by its own intensity, served England, always well informed on all points, as a gauge by which to measure how far she might venture. At that moment France failed to derive, either from her rights, her good faith, or her intentions, which were both reasonable and honest, that ardent and unanimous impulse which, under different conditions, has not infrequently helped to encourage and stimulate the government' (page 147).

that he has mentioned this matter to the Governor of Tripoli, who does not doubt the French intention of gaining possession of the two villages, and believes that, sooner or later, they will succeed.

The oases of Gadames and Ghat are situated on the caravan way which, starting from Tripoli, divides into two branches, one leading past Agades to Sokoto, the other past Bilma to Lake Tsad. As Tripoli's prosperity depends entirely upon trade, deprived of her caravan ways which lead into Sokoto, Bornu, Baghirmi, and Wadai, Tripoli might well be compared to an empty jewel-case. Now the French establishment at Barruva on Lake Tsad, which was sanctioned by the Anglo-French agreement of August 5, 1890, will cut off communications between Tripoli and Sokoto and render those with Bornu most difficult. French occupation of Gadames and Ghat would leave Tripoli only the Bengasi-Kufra road, which would lose its outlet should France conquer the Wadai, which feat she will, in all probability, accomplish.

At Gadames the Turks have a garrison of more than five hundred men, and they are the true masters there. Foreigners may not reside at Gadames, and an Algerian who had intrigued openly in favour of France was recently expelled.

This incident brought about the recall of the governor of Gadames, a concession which Turkey was obliged to make to Ambassador Cambon, *pro bono pacis*.

France is now working to obtain the right for Algerians to reside at Gadames, and this once achieved, she will take advantage of the privilege to send agents thither, who will seek to direct the current of trade from the Tsad region towards Tunis.

To this must be added that a French semi-official exploring expedition under young de Maistre has just left Algiers and is proceeding towards Ghat.

The attention of the governments of Berlin and London has been called to this matter, they having as great an interest as we ourselves have in the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean. But these communications, which were not of an official character, have received but scant consideration. Germany has no desire to place obstacles in the way of French advance in Africa, and England, threatened in the Nile Valley, is now seeking an adjustment with Paris, and everything points to the conclusion that, to obtain this, she will willingly sacrifice the Tripoli *Hinterland*.

(Second Memorandum.)

The *Carte générale des possessions françaises en Afrique au premier janvier, 1895*, published in Paris by Augustin Challamel (Librairie Coloniale, 5 rue Jacob), by order of the Colonial Office, and intended for distribution among the members of the French Chamber of Deputies, cannot fail to attract general attention.

In order that the true purpose of this map may not escape the eye of him for whom it is intended, only those countries and regions which are looked upon in France as French possessions are set down in two shades of pink, on a white expanse of African continent. These regions, as the map's inscription explains, are divided into two categories, namely:

1. Possessions and countries under the direct protectorate;
2. Zone of political influence.

The first have a groundwork of closely placed horizontal lines, the second of dots, these signs conveying the impression of a deeper tint for the first and a paler one for the second.

The meridian of Paris has been taken for the basis of this map.

Now what immediately strikes the observer (beyond the fact that Tunis is made simply a continuation of the direct possessions and joined to Algeria) is the frankness in admitting the intention of constructing a great whole, stretching from Cape Bon to Brazzaville on the Congo, and from Cape Verde to Bahr-el-Ghazal, while an attempt is made to limit Morocco to the coast region without any *Hinterland* whatsoever, and the possessions of other European nations are lined up along the Atlantic seaboard as far as the mouth of the Congo.

The great pink spot is thus made to advance in a sweeping curve which stretches from the Gulf of Gabes to the fifth degree of latitude north, whence it encroaches on the territory of Bar-el-Ghazal.

Nor is this all. The other spot, starting from the Bay of Tagiura, proceeds with a hazy outline, which points to the intention of joining the first in such a manner as to surround the valley of the Nile on the south, thus cutting off all communication with Austral-Africa.

When we consider the fixed purpose with which France continues to gnaw the *Hinterlands* still belonging to Morocco and Tripoli, the right of pre-ferment which she claims upon the territory of the independent Congo state, with which she has recently concluded a convention in direct contradiction with that already existing between the Congo and England concerning the regions around



the Albert Nyanza, thus disposing in favour of the Congo of a territory situated in the Nile Valley; if we further consider her open opposition to English action in Egypt, and her exertions in Ethiopia against the spread of Italian influence which was sanctioned by treaty, we must perceive what this map, which is both recent and official, shows plainly enough, that France is carrying out the vast plan of bringing under her domination and influence the whole of the Dark Continent from beyond the tenth parallel of latitude S. to the shores of the Mediterranean.

If, after a summary examination of this map, we proceed to study it carefully, we shall find this fact confirmed by many significant details. While great care has been taken to establish the territorial divisions of the countries of Austral-Africa in the neighbourhood of the equator, the frontiers of each, and the name of the power holding either direct possession or a protectorate being clearly indicated, the same has not been done for the countries of the north. In the whole of eastern Africa there is no sign of a frontier line, nor is there anything to indicate possession, save along the coast of the Indian Ocean between the northern and north-eastern boundaries of the German possessions there, as far as Guardafui, this stretch of coast being divided into two parts by the delta of the Giuba. Upon this tract, and in very close proximity to the coast, are the two inscriptions: 'English East African Possessions' to the west of the Giuba, and 'Italian Possessions' to the east of that river.

Farther north there is no trace of the boundaries separating the zones of influence of the two powers in the Somali peninsula, which were established by

the Anglo-Italian convention of May 1894. The conditions are still worse, however, in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Aden and of the Red Sea, for, while the south-eastern boundary of the French domain of Obock is carried forward nearly to the city of Harar, the map shows nothing to indicate the position of Italy's possessions on the Red Sea or in Erythræa, the region under our protectorate in Ethiopia, or the western boundaries of our zone of influence, which were established by the Anglo-Italian conventions of March and April 1891.

The only boundary set down in this vast zone of Italian and English influence in eastern Africa is the one mentioned above, which was established by the Anglo-French convention of February 1888, but all names or other indications which might prove embarrassing are carefully omitted, and the frontier, instead of stopping to the north-east of Gildezza, as prescribed by the above-named convention, is brought forward, as already stated, to the near neighbourhood of Harar, which city shows, on the north, that pale pink tint used to indicate such towns as are subject to French influence.

But Italy is not the only country whose interests are arbitrarily disposed of by this official map.

On the shores of the Red Sea, as along the entire Nile Valley, it would be useless to seek for any indication of the interests or influence of England or any other power; the same may be said of the African coast of the Mediterranean as far as the Gulf of Gabes, that is to say up to the point where the *deep pink* begins, which indicates French domination. We note, furthermore, that whereas in the Mediterranean, the name 'I. de Malte' is followed by the letter A (*anglaise*), and the same

is the case with 'Gibraltar,' the A is omitted after the words 'I. de Chypre.'

But this same compiler, who took such scrupulous care to point out that Malta and Gibraltar are English, forgot to note that for centuries Spain has held possessions along the African shore of the Straits of Gibraltar, and he furthermore forgot that the coast of the Atlantic from Cape Bojado to Cape Blanco, which is known as the Rio dell' Oro, and is under the captainry of the Canary Islands, is also Spanish.

Nor will the student be less surprised by an inspection of the other countries set down in pink, which, in the opinion of the map's compiler, form the *Possessions françaises en Afrique*.

By means of the same expedients which brought French influence as far as Harar, waves of delicate pink are made to lap at the very gates of Figui, which has hitherto belonged to Morocco, to wash around the oases of Gadames and Ghat (Rhat on the map), which have always been recognised as forming part of the Tripoli *Hinterland*, and to encompass Jat, whence the pale line of French influence turns boldly south-eastwards, to bring up, as we have said before, in the Bahr-el-Ghazal territory, at the 5° of lat. N. Here it mingles with the darker colour, which marks direct possession, and which extends north and north-west from the Ubangi and M'Bomu in the south, thus embracing the entire basin of the Upper Sciarì as far as the 10° of lat. N., whence, turning to the right, it encircles Lake Tsad from the mouth of the Sciarì on the east to the town of Cura, against which, as usual, a wave of pale pink is made to break.

On the west a straight line starting from the

Algerian possessions which are set down as direct, even farther south than Figuig, cuts across the intersecting point of the  $5^{\circ}$  of lon. west of Paris, with the  $30^{\circ}$  of lat. N., and brings up at the  $21^{\circ} 20'$  of lat. N. on the continuation of the dividing line between Senegal and the government of Rio dell' Oro, which it deprives of all *Hinterland*.

These two lines connect the French possessions on the Mediterranean with those of Senegal, with French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and the French Congo; and from the Niger to Lake Tsad the connection is effected by another line which, regardless of the Anglo-French convention of August 1890, follows the  $12^{\circ}$  of lat. N., leaving Barruva and Sokoto to France.

The Dahomey territory is omitted from this vast whole, because the *Hinterlands* of the English Gold Coast, of German Togo, of French Dahomey and the Niger region, which is also English, have never formed the subject of conventions between the several powers, whose interests might prove conflicting. But this fact does not discourage the resourceful author of the map. He simply lengthens out, towards the north, the frontiers that separate Dahomey and German Togo on the west, and Dahomey and the English Niger territory on the east. He then gives these lines a bold turn, the first north-westwards as far as a point just beyond the  $10^{\circ}$  of lat. N., the second also north-westwards as far as the right bank of the Niger, which river he makes the actual north-east boundary; and hereupon, by means of a broad band of the familiar pale pink, he sets a limit to the *Hinterlands* of German Togo and the English Gold Coast, and joins Dahomey to the African dominions of France.



These dominions therefore possess, for the moment at least, three bases for expansion, without counting a fourth to which they aspire on the other side—the Bay of Tadjura. These bases are Tunis and Algeria in the north, what the author of the map calls the French Sudan on the west, and the French Congo on the south, to which they expect to add the independent Congo States.

Thus, besides the fact that the oasis of Tuat must be considered as lost, encompassed as it would thus be by the zone of French influence, and that the false position in which Gadames and Ghat have been placed must offend all who are interested in preserving the integrity of Morocco and Tripoli, we find that the *Hinterland* of Tripoli itself is being made the object of an attack of a most alarming nature.

If we admit this new political geography of Africa, the two great caravan ways which lead to Lake Tsad from Tripoli and Gadames by way of the oasis of Bilma would be at the mercy of France, as the oasis of Bilma itself would be in her possession, and through this region both roads must pass. Nor is this all. Wadai and Baghirmi being included within the zone of French influence, France would be free to follow her own inclinations as regards expansion towards the east.

When, at the time of the Anglo-German convention concerning Lake Tsad (November 20, 1893), England made the proposal, to which Germany agreed, that this country should not extend her influence farther east than the Sciari, and when, in the agreement between Germany and France drawn up on February 4, 1894, it was again repeated that the Sciari should form the limit of German ex-

pansion on the east, the contracting parties certainly did not intend it to be understood that what had been refused to Germany was conceded to France.

The most we are prepared to admit is that the question may become the object of future agreements between the powers interested, if only because of the simple fact that, as far as France is concerned, those regions, according to the *Hinterland* theory, are beyond the sphere of her influence, and that, even should Germany and England consent to tolerate these encroachments on their Atlantic possessions (the Niger Company and Cameroon), the theory itself would still be in favour of Tripoli, even though the rights of Turkey be disregarded.

We must not omit to mention that, according to the rules established by the Berlin Conference, declarations of protectorate must be notified to all subscribing powers who possess the right to protest.

Now nothing of the sort has been done in the case of Wadai, of Baghirmi, or of several other regions.

We wish to state in conclusion that the map we have examined (while it demonstrates that France has been guilty of usurpation in the true sense of the word, either because the powers who subscribed at the Conference were not notified when the territories were incorporated, or because these territories already formed part of the domains of other powers) entirely disregards the rights acquired by Italy in Africa, rights ratified by regular treaties, does not even allude to those possessed by England on the Nile, and strikes a heavy blow at the balance of power in the Mediterranean by arbitrarily establishing the *Hinterlands* of Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco. In the same arbitrary manner have

the boundaries been fixed of the Spanish possessions on the Mediterranean, of the German and Portuguese possessions on the Atlantic, and, as we have seen, even those of the Congo Free State itself.

Hereafter the onward march of France towards the great caravan ways that connect Tripoli with Central Africa suffered no check. A new Anglo-French convention (14 June, 1898), amplified by a further declaration on March 21, 1899, after the Fashoda incident, granted France a still vaster zone of influence. Italy's spasmodic attempts to defend the rights of Turkey came to nought, and at Constantinople the suspicion that we contemplated the occupation of Tripoli was considered of greater importance than the fact of French usurpation.

France no longer suffered any anxiety concerning the conquest of Tunisia. As long as the Italian government held fast to the rights and privileges which she enjoyed in Tunis by virtue of treaties that France, in 1881, had declared should be respected, Italy was in a position to dominate France and, desirous as was this latter power of seeing her conquest firmly established, might easily have brought her to terms. But the Rudinì-Visconti-Venosta Ministry made an unrequited sacrifice of this position in order to placate French ill-humour.

As early as August 15, 1895, the French government had denounced the treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation concluded on September 8, 1868, between Italy and Tunisia, declaring that she was acting in the Bey's name and in accordance with the treaty of Kassar-Said (sometimes called treaty of Bardo), signed on May 12, 1881. The Crispi Ministry replied as follows through the Ambassador at Paris, Count Tornielli :—

... it is indeed true that on June 9, 1881, Monsieur Rustan brought the treaty of Kassar-Said to the notice of his Italian Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Tunis. But no memorandum of this communication was made by us, nor did we sign any receipt for it. Therefore, while reserving for myself the most ample freedom of action as

regards the matter to which Monsieur Lavour's note refers, I beg Your Excellency to make a verbal declaration to the French government of the objections His Majesty's government entertains against the course which has been pursued.

The following telegram from Tornielli contains the reply he received from the government of the Republic :—

The Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me that the clause providing for a tacit renewal for twenty-eight years left him practically no choice, and forced him to denounce the Italo-Tunisian treaty, because, at the present moment, no power would be willing to bind itself for so long a period. He added that, fortunately, the provisions made by those who negotiated the treaty in the beginning, leave us a year's time, during which we shall have ample opportunity of discussing our views and making the most advantageous arrangements for the future. The Minister does not for a moment suppose that the Italian government regards this act of denouncing the treaty in any other light than that in which it was really performed, that is to say as an act made necessary by the above-named clause of renewal. But he nevertheless wishes to make it clearly understood that the French government has been swayed by no other considerations. I informed the Minister that I had received no instructions on this point, but that I would communicate his declarations to Your Excellency.

Crispi was most unwilling to relinquish without compensation those privileges which Italy had obtained by means of previous capitulations and conventions, all of which had been ratified by the treaty of 1868 which still held, and he was determined that France should be made to consider the interests of Italy. There was a year's time for discussion and negotia-



tions, but on March 1, 1896, the Crispi Ministry resigned, and negotiations were henceforth carried on by the Rudinì-Caetani Ministry, which attempted to handle simultaneously both the Tunis question and that of the readjustment of Franco-Italian commercial relations. Now these two issues had nothing in common. In Tunis our juridical position was excellent, and we held rights which must be maintained, for there was no reason to hope that, by relinquishing those rights, we should bring France to grant us especially favourable conditions of tariff.

In France, indeed, where no one gave our just claims a single thought, the idea of resuming the conventional regime in her commercial dealings with Italy was considered not only a gratuitous concession but an over-generous one as well. The French government, aware of the pitch to which public opinion was roused against us, besought the Italian minister not to press the point. Some months passed before the Rudinì Ministry was recomposed and Visconti-Venosta succeeded Duke Caetani at the Foreign Office. Visconti-Venosta saw at once that our situation had become less advantageous, for England, who in August 1895 had declared her intention of co-operating with Italy, had taken advantage of our government's lapse from vigilance, and had consented to open negotiations with France, and withdraw from her perpetual treaty with the Bey. In July 1896 Austria-Hungary had also yielded to the pressing solicitations of France, but had reserved her prerogative as the favoured nation in Tunisia. It had now become impossible to carry out Crispi's programme, for Italy could no longer count upon the support of the allied and friendly powers of which Crispi had been sure. The Hon. Visconti-Venosta did not even insist upon a commercial agreement, and on September 28, 1896, those conventions were signed by virtue of which, after fifteen years and without receiving any compensation, Italy recognised the French conquest of Tunisia and accepted its consequences. Monsieur Billot, who was French Ambassador at Rome at the time, has recently said of this event :<sup>1</sup> 'We were thus enabled to free our protectorate of those hindrances which had hitherto paralysed

<sup>1</sup> A. Billot, *La France et l'Italie : Histoire des années troubles*, vol. ii. p. 372.

its activity. . . . Italy relinquished her claim to be considered as enjoying equal rights with ourselves in Tunisia, and consented to accept all the consequences of those events which had assured us a privileged position in this country. . . .’

In 1902 the famous Franco-Italian agreement was negotiated, through which Italy promised to relinquish all her interests in Morocco in favour of France, France, on her part, granting us a free hand in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

This arrangement proved most advantageous for the government of the Republic, for whereas the commercial value of the two *vilayets* had been much impaired by the encroachments on their *Hinterlands* of the French themselves, Minister Delcassé, who concluded the arrangements with Minister Prinetti, was but yielding up to Italian influence a region where France had no interests, and which she could never have made hers. An attempt to do so on her part would not have been tolerated by Italy, nor would she have been alone in combating it.

The surrender of Morocco to the influence of France alone was a severe blow to Italian interests, and the future of our Mediterranean policy was seriously compromised by it. France, over-powerful upon the sea which surrounds us, is a permanent menace to us. Crispi had intended that Tripoli should become Italian in compensation for the expansion France had already achieved by her occupation of Tunisia; Morocco, which was then independent, could not be made the object of agreements which related to the past. It was for this purpose that he laboured to create Italian interests and promote the spread of Italian influence within the empire of the *Scherif*, and arrange certain compacts with Spain which his successors, alas, were unable to maintain.

During his first term of office Crispi’s endeavours were signally successful. The Sultan, Mulei Hassan, authorised the establishment by certain Italians of a gun-factory and mint at Fez, and such was this monarch’s respect for the opinions and advice of our government that, when it was finally decided to provide Turkey with a navy, an Italian firm, that of Orlando at Leghorn, received the order for the first battleship.

In Morocco, Spain had a past to maintain and many important interests at stake, in connection not only with her direct possessions in that country, and the privileges she had acquired

through the treaty of Wad Ras, but with her geographical position as well. The policy of co-operation with Italy in resisting French encroachments, a policy adopted by several of her statesmen, the Duke di Tetuan among others, was therefore a wise one. As long as Crispi remained in power, Spain enjoyed the support not only of his advice but also of his influential standing with the Great Powers, and had this policy of co-operation been pursued Spain would have acquired a far more advantageous position in Morocco.

In France public opinion was strong against the Franco-Italian agreement of 1902, although this agreement was, in the main, unfavourable to Italy. There was not a single French writer on international questions who did not deplore it, looking at it from one point of view only, as if France alone were to be considered and other nations had no right to seek to provide for their future welfare. Until very lately they have declared that '... the *status quo* in Tripolitania is the best guarantee for the continuance of friendly relations between France and Italy in the Mediterranean. Should Italy take possession of Tripoli, friendly relations would become impossible.'<sup>1</sup>

But a few months since, in February 1912, when hostilities between Italy and Turkey had already begun, Gabriel Hanotaux, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote that the occupation of Tripoli by Italy 'marks the beginning of a great struggle between Italy and France.'<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, unless our neighbours on the west be speedily aroused to a greater sense of justice, unless the government of the Republic succeed in overcoming the latent hostility with which the French people regard everything that is of advantage to Italy, unless France make up her mind to forget the history of her domination and of the influence she once possessed on this side of the Alps, Gabriel Hanotaux's words may prove a prophecy. And that, indeed, would be a sad day for the two nations who would have so much to gain from co-operation in the work of civilising Africa.

But although the future may indeed hold 'the great struggle' in store for us, of one thing at least we are sure, that the torch to start the blaze will not be applied by Italy.

<sup>1</sup> R. Pinon, *L'Empire de la Méditerranée*.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Figaro*: 'Le Danger Punique.'

Not until 1910 did the Porte consent to the establishment of definite boundaries, and in order that this concession on her part should not compromise the recognition of the Bardo treaty, she demanded and obtained that the commissioners for Tunisia be appointed, not by the French Resident, but by the Bey.

The commissioners met at Tripoli in April 1910. At the outset the Turkish delegates stipulated for a line that should extend from El Biban on the coast, to the oasis of Remada, thus restoring to Tripoli the regions upon which France had encroached. Soon, however, this stipulation was withdrawn, in obedience to what influence, who can say? and on May 10 an act was signed which contained a map whereon the boundary line was plainly traced. This boundary line runs from the Mediterranean to Gadames, covering a distance of 480 kilometres; it starts from Ras Adjedir (or Adjir), touches Dehibat, passes between Dehibat and Uezzan, turns in the direction of the two wells of Zar, one of which is assigned to Tunisia, the other to Tripoli, and then proceeds towards the well of Mechiguig (or Imchiguig), which is left to Tripolitania. From this point onwards the line continues at an equal distance between the two caravan ways of Djeneien-Gadames and Nalut-Gadames, skirts the Sebkhath-el-Melah, and brings up at a spot some fifteen kilometres to the south of Gadames, which remains in the possession of Tripoli. (Léon Pervinquière: *La Tripolitaine interdite—Ghadames.*)

It was originally intended that the Franco-Turkish commission should extend its labours and establish the boundary of the zone of influence beyond Gadames, but vaguely outlined even by the Anglo-French agreements, which agreements, moreover, were not recognised by Turkey. But the Italo-Turkish war prevented this conference, and the question thus left open must now be decided between France and Italy, if the Italian government has not already been weak enough to yield to French demands without weighing the consequences, beginning with the recognition of the occupation of Gianet, which was accomplished by France while the recent war was still in progress, and in defiance of her declarations of neutrality.



## CHAPTER III

### THE FORTIFICATIONS OF BISERTA

Biserta the 'greatest strategical point on the Mediterranean'—Crispi prevents its fortification by France—The agreements of 1881, which had been ratified by several French ministers, are declared by Ribot to be of no value—Germany's astonishment at Ribot's theories—Lord Salisbury places reliance in the declaration made by France that she will not fortify Biserta—A memorandum from Crispi to Salisbury—Chancellor Caprivi and the Italian protest—Possibility of war—Crispi's withdrawal from office leaves France free to act—Biserta and the German General Staff—Crispi's painful anxiety revealed in a letter to King Humbert—Biserta strongly fortified, the pride of France and a menace to Italy.

THE Biserta question, which had begun to smoulder, so to speak, as early as the year 1881, blazed forth with greater heat during Crispi's first term of office (1887-91).

As Minister of Foreign Affairs the Hon. Crispi kept the matter well in view, and never neglected (*a*) to see that the progress and nature of the work going on at Biserta was carefully watched on the spot; (*b*) to acquaint the friendly and allied powers, and all others interested as well, with the progress of this work and with any incident worthy of note; (*c*) to demand explanations and seek to obtain guarantees from the French government; (*d*) and, above all, to seek to induce England to join with Italy and her allies in initiating some decided action calculated to check the progress of this undertaking, which, as soon became apparent, was in direct contradiction with the promises France had made at the moment of assuming the protectorate of Tunisia, and which threatened to upset the balance of power and the *status quo* in the Mediterranean.

After much urging on our part, the British Cabinet finally issued a memorandum on January 10, 1889, containing, besides

a declaration to our government in which Biserta was recognised as the 'strongest strategical point' on the Mediterranean, a severe admonition to the government of the French Republic to maintain the promises made in 1881. Germany took similar steps through her Ambassador in Paris, with the result that France, finding the eyes of all Europe fixed upon Biserta, was unable to put her plans into execution. The French government, in fact (Goblet being Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time), hastened to assure London and Rome that it had no intention of either enlarging or fortifying the harbour of Biserta, and that the work then in progress was simply that of dredging, which became necessary at fixed intervals.

Fresh solicitations on the part of Minister Crispi, on January 29, 1889, elicited a reply from Lord Salisbury confirming the opinion already expressed by him that the Biserta question was of as much importance to Great Britain as to Italy, and assuring us that a constant watch was being kept on the spot, and that at frequent intervals a vessel was detached from the fleet and sent to ascertain the true state of affairs.

Henceforth the correspondence on this subject between Vienna, Rome, London, Paris, and Berlin was uninterrupted. As late as November 5, 1889, Lord Salisbury declared our apprehensions concerning the port of Biserta, and the work being cautiously carried on there, to be fully justified.

On June 25, 1890, Ambassador Tornielli telegraphed to Rome as follows:—

'Salisbury has informed me that Monsieur Waddington (French Ambassador in London) denies that the work in progress at Biserta is of a military character.'

But in October the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Monsieur Ribot, while protesting that no plans were being made for the construction of military works at Biserta, did not hesitate to declare that France, should she see fit to do so, was perfectly free to execute such works, and his answer to the Italian Ambassador's objection that his predecessors in office had bound themselves not to fortify the port, was to the effect that the French government would not be held responsible for

any previous declarations, and that the Bey, moreover, had the right to take any precautions he might deem necessary.

General Menabrea's report of the defiant theory maintained by Monsieur Ribot was immediately communicated to the Chanceries of the friendly Powers, who looked upon the French Minister's attitude as a challenge not only in appearance but in fact. The German Chancellor regarded it with much indignation, as the following letter from Ambassador di Launay plainly shows.

BERLIN, 5 November, 1890.

*To His Excellency the Prime Minister.*

At the weekly reception which took place yesterday, I was able to communicate to the Secretary of State the contents of Your Excellency's despatch of October 30. I availed myself of the enclosure to draw up a private memorandum, of which I will forward a copy, omitting, however, the last two paragraphs concerning the attitude of England at the present moment. Of the contents of these, I gave a verbal account.

Baron von Marschall was severe in his condemnation of the theory proclaimed by Monsieur Ribot with regard to the invalidity of the written and verbal declarations concerning the port of Biserta, made by two of his predecessors. Such a doctrine, the Baron said, was contrary to all the rules that control international relations, and entirely incompatible with an honest policy, from which no power should swerve. It would, moreover, be a cynical and dishonourable act to take refuge behind the sovereignty of the Bey of Tunis, who had become a mere puppet, his actions serving only to hide the true intentions of France. This was but a fresh blunder to be added to the list of those already committed by the Minister of the Republic. He

would have done better had he been satisfied with declaring that the work to be carried out at Biserta, and that already in course of execution there, was for purposes of commerce only.

The Secretary of State has promised to write to the German Ambassador in London and instruct him to support, at the Foreign Office, the opinions set forth in the memorandum to which I have already referred, and to call the attention of that Office to its contents.

Although Lord Salisbury may not consider that the time has come to remind the French Cabinet of its formal promises (perhaps because public opinion in England is not yet sufficiently roused on this point), it cannot be denied that his Ministry is animated by the best of intentions towards us, and is carefully watching every movement of the French. A little pressure, however, may be of use.

The Chancellor of the Empire, whom I accompanied to the station yesterday in order to take leave of him at the moment of his departure for Italy, confirmed, in a general way, what the Secretary of State had already said to me.

LAUNAY.

As a matter of fact Lord Salisbury appeared inclined to trust the assurances of France, and to the German Ambassador he expressed the opinion that ‘. . . it would be unwise to demand explanations at Paris until such a time as the true intentions of France should have been clearly revealed by some decided action, Monsieur Waddington having assured him that his government did not propose to make a fortified port of Biserta.’

Crispi was now compelled to lay before the English government proofs that the works in question were indeed for military purposes, and to point out the importance of the question and the disastrous consequences it might entail.



Here is the memorandum which he forwarded to Lord Salisbury.

Biserta or *Benzerta*, the ancient Hippo-Zarytos of the Phœnicians, situated on the coast of Tunisia at the point where the African continent stretches out towards Sicily, sits enthroned on either side of that arm of the sea which leads to the lake of the same name. When the proposed works are completed, this lake, which is both broad and deep, will afford fifty square miles of anchorage to the largest vessels. Occupying the position it does on the Mediterranean, favoured by nature, which has given it a vast harbour and one well protected both against the violence of the sea and the attacks of hostile fleets, Biserta, in the hands of a maritime power of the first class as it is to-day, must be considered a factor of great importance in estimating the means of offence and defence appertaining to the positions of the different European powers.

This new situation, created by the events of 1881, immediately occupied the attention of the Cabinets interested in the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and gave rise to the exchange of notes, of remonstrances on the one side and vague assurances on the other, which began as soon as the French descended upon Tunisia, and has not yet been brought to a close.

This exchange of notes clearly shows that at the beginning of the year 1889 Her Britannic Majesty's Prime Minister appeared to be deeply interested in the matter, concerning which he had received pressing messages also from Berlin. Later on, however, certain explanations furnished by Paris led him to believe that 'the works planned were of no great importance.' One year later, on the third of

last June, being still of opinion that what was going forward at Biserta was of slight moment, he declared to His Italian Majesty's Ambassador that if England and Italy remained united, as he hoped they would, their combined naval forces would render them superior in strength to any other power, and that they would have nothing to fear from the *fortlets* (fortins) at Biserta. Again in September the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs declared that 'the work in progress did not as yet appear to be for military purposes.'

The following observations will serve to demonstrate that the opinion expressed by the Foreign Office does not correspond with the true state of affairs.

By increasing the depth of the present harbour of Biserta a few metres and enlarging its mouth by demolishing the Kasba, the demands of commerce might easily be satisfied, trade being but slight at this point, as may be ascertained from the customs returns, which never amount to the sum of 50,000 francs per annum. Now, as the supposition that the French intend to make Biserta the port of Tunisia is most improbable, important works being in progress at the present moment in the port of Tunis itself,<sup>1</sup> at a distance of but two-and-thirty miles from Biserta, we are led to conclude that any works whose purpose is not the improvement of the present harbour, but the creation of a new one of superior dimensions, are works of a strictly military character. The undertaking now in progress at

<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Ribot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a report presented to the President of the Republic on October 15, 1890, declares that there are in course of construction—(1) an outer harbour at La Goulette; (2) a channel 8 kilometres long and 6½ metres deep from La Goulette to Tunis, passing through the lake of the same name; (3) a 'basin' at Tunis itself. The whole to be completed by July 1894. Estimated cost—thirteen millions.

Biserta is precisely the construction of an immense harbour, one of the largest in the world, for which an entrance channel two hundred metres broad and twelve metres deep is being dug.

It is worthy of note that even were the anchorage space much less vast, the depth which it is proposed to give this channel would suffice to prove that it is intended to accommodate the largest men-of-war. In fact there are to-day no merchant vessels drawing nine or even eight metres of water, which depth is reached only by battleships of the first class, of from twelve to fourteen thousand tons. The Suez Canal, through which the ships of all nations must pass, which was created especially for purposes of commerce, and provides a passage for the largest steamers of the world's mercantile navy, is but eight metres deep.

Nor is there any lack of direct evidence to prove that in what is being done at Biserta, as well as in what has been planned for the future, the true purpose is war, not commerce. One proof of this is the construction of a very large barrack, for which a decree of expropriation of the necessary area was published as far back as last May. Further proofs are the creation of shelters for the engineers' corps, which are already completed; the additions made but a few days since to the permanent garrison; the construction of fortifications to be begun presently, in view of which the government of Tunisia has recently published (on the third of this very month) a decree signed by the Bey, establishing military servitude;<sup>1</sup> and finally the chartering of a powerful

<sup>1</sup> Article 1 of this decree fixes the zone of servitude at the 'polygone exceptionnel du village des Andalous,' which is a suburb on the coast, directly to the north of Biserta.

company called the *Port of Biserta Company*,<sup>1</sup> with a capital of nine millions, proves that here it is not a question of trifling, unimportant works, but rather of great undertakings in which, after what has been stated above, and despite the private character which has been purposely attributed to them, we have every reason to perceive the intention of converting Biserta into a military port.

It would be futile to object that a far larger sum and a long period of time would be necessary to effect this transformation, for it is a well-known fact that for enterprises such as these, which are intimately connected with the national defence, funds are always forthcoming as soon as they become necessary. We should rather consider a fact which is less universally recognised, that no very extensive labours would be necessary to make a military port of Biserta, and that the length of time and amount of expenditure necessary would be slight in proportion to the results to be obtained. It must be borne in mind, furthermore, that although the place might not be fully equipped at the outbreak of hostilities, it would nevertheless prove of great service to France and a serious menace to her enemies, if the channel were but rendered practicable for large vessels and were protected by a few large batteries along the shore, and if the place itself held a reserve supply of coal, victuals, and ammunition, and afforded the necessary means of repairing damages.

There is, therefore, nothing improbable in the supposition that if France desire it (and everything tends to prove that she does) she may, in something

<sup>1</sup> In the above-named report Monsieur Ribot says that the 'Company is founded, that its statutes are published and its work already begun.'



over four years, possess in Biserta a safe and extensive military port, which will render admirable services as a basis for maritime expeditions in the southern Mediterranean and as a harbour of refuge in case of defeat. And even should this transformation not be effected for ten years to come, can we fail to recognise that the power of France upon the sea would be enormously increased thereby?

At present France possesses but one military port on the Mediterranean, that of Toulon, which occupies a position so disadvantageous as regards southern Italy and the Ionian Sea that it would be impossible for a large body of troops to sail from this port for the south of our peninsula or for Sicily without running a serious risk, not only on account of the distance to be covered but also because its movements would be watched from the Madalena by the Italian fleet. But when Biserta shall have become accessible to great vessels, which will find there the necessary supplies of coal, victuals, and ammunition, as well as the means of repairing damages, when this place shall have been fortified both by sea and by land, then the French on the Tunisian coast will be in a position to threaten any hostile squadron which may be manœuvring in the southern basin of the Mediterranean. They will also be able (while avoiding those waters which are guarded by the fleet off the Madalena) to reach Naples in twenty hours, and to throw themselves upon Cagliari in Sicily in less than eight hours.

In the above account the difficulties arising from the distance which separates Toulon from the coast of southern Italy have not been exaggerated. It would not, indeed, be a question of a squadron or a fleet, which would be able to navigate the Medi-

terranean no matter what the temper of the waters might be, but of a convoy of transports (more than a hundred of them) navigating under the protection of a squadron, and consequently making but slow progress.

This convoy, moreover, would be unable to effect a landing in stormy weather, in which case it would be obliged either to seek shelter or return to Toulon, both of which alternatives would expose it to the danger of being attacked by our fleet supported by the Madalena. These difficulties do not arise so much from the mere fact of the distance, as from the dangers to which the convoy would be exposed during its long journey, dangers threatening from two sources, from the sea, whose stormy condition might make it impossible to reach the landing-point in time, or might even interrupt the work of disembarking, and from the enemy's fleet, which would certainly seize this favourable opportunity and attack the convoy on its way.

But if Biserta be taken as the starting-point, all these difficulties vanish. The invading corps would be centred there, nor would France be in the necessity of bringing over troops from Europe for this purpose, as she already has a permanent army corps in Algeria which is fully equipped. With the transports lying ready in Biserta harbour, the convoy might quietly await a moment when the conditions of the war were favourable to the proposed manœuvre, and then setting sail some calm evening, appear off the coast of Sicily by daybreak on the following morning, without having been signalled by the enemy. A landing might then be easily effected before the arrival of the troops destined to defend the island.

It is unnecessary to point out that the landing of a large body of troops in Sicily (say thirty-five or forty thousand men) would have a powerful effect upon the course of the war. Such an event would prove both a moral and a material disaster, and might even result in irreparable defeat. It must also be borne in mind that, should France desire to reinforce her Algerian garrison at the beginning of hostilities, her maritime resources and the new port of Biserta would enable her to pour two army corps (60,000 men) into Sicily—the distance being so short and the Madalena far away—and thus make sure of outnumbering the troops charged with the defence of the island.<sup>1</sup>

But not only Italy and her allies the Central Powers would be affected by the enormous increase of power which France would derive from the possession of a new basis of maritime operations in the Mediterranean. The interests of England would also be seriously compromised, even though the alliance of that country with Italy be already an accomplished fact. The danger would lie not indeed in the ‘fortlets of Biserta,’ but in the new situation arising from the existence on the African coast of a French military post, whence France might easily attack southern Italy and Sicily regardless of the movements of the Italian fleet operating off the Madalena. This new port would not only paralyse the action of the Madalena in the southern Mediterranean, but also necessitate the maintenance of

<sup>1</sup> The studies for the defence of Sicily in case of war with France are based upon the supposition of the landing of two army corps. This body might be transported to the western coast of Sicily in several divisions, thanks to the position of the port of Biserta, and this without the necessity of collecting the large number of transports which would be indispensable were these same troops to be brought from Toulon by means of a single convoy.

a large observation corps in Sicily and of strong garrisons in all the coast towns of southern Italy. It would consequently become necessary to diminish the number of troops destined for service beyond the Alps, and this even though England and Italy be allies.

Such would be the consequences of the creation of a new Toulon at Biserta; such are the dangers which Italy would have to fear far more than any direct attack upon her vessels which the fortifications of the new port might make. These fortifications would be but the necessary complement of any seaport, and must be considered as such and not as works placed where all are bound to pass.

But this is not all. The creation of this new military post would indeed be directly injurious to Italy and indirectly so to her allies, owing to the diminishing of the kingdom's power of offence and to the danger to which Sicily would be exposed; but England herself, despite the fact, or rather owing to the fact, of her being the world's first maritime power, would also be seriously affected by it, even should she already have become Italy's ally, and this independently of the indirect injury to which she would be exposed in this last-named capacity.

We have only to consider the respective positions of Gibraltar, Biserta, Malta, and Port Saïd to realise that, should Biserta become a military port, she would occupy a formidable offensive position on the flank of any vessel coming from the East or going in that direction. She would be able to harass or even check all trade passing by Gibraltar and Malta through the Red Sea, that is to say, England's commerce with India, and to prevent the junction of the English or Italo-English fleets in the southern



Mediterranean. This would oblige England, whether she become Italy's ally or remain neutral, to increase her naval forces in the Mediterranean, while her commerce, which is her life, would continue to suffer perpetual menace. She would, moreover, be forced to weaken her Channel fleet where, in view of a possible European conflagration, she must of necessity maintain her supremacy as mistress of the sea.

At their meeting in Milan on November 8, 1890, Crispi had told Count Caprivi that he could not suffer Biserta to become a military port, and the German Chancellor had fully realised the importance of the question to Italy. When in January 1891 it became evident that France was determined to disregard the protests of Italy and persevere in carrying out a pre-established scheme, Crispi appealed to England and the allied Powers to unite in bringing pressure to bear on the French government, which should cause the suspension of the work already begun at Biserta and prevent its being resumed at a future date.

That the *ultima ratio* of this step might be war, Caprivi fully understood, and he even went so far as to say to our ambassador that while he hoped the allies would be able to achieve their purpose without a conflict, they must, nevertheless, be prepared for the worst, in which event they must be ready to avail themselves of every possible factor of success, either political or military. 'Now,' he added, 'the German infantry will not be equipped with small bore rifles until next spring, and the two new army corps will not be formed before next winter. We must therefore act with great caution and deliberation.'

A few days later the Crispi Ministry fell, and the energetic movement it had set afoot was allowed to drop. England and Germany immediately realised that the hand at the helm of Italian politics was no longer the same, and took advantage of the circumstance. Throughout the discussion of the Tunisian question Lord Salisbury had felt the predominance of the interests of Italy over those of England, and had

maintained towards Crispi's appeals an attitude of passive courtesy without, however, venturing to question the Italian Minister's stringent logic, and disavow certain previous declarations of his own. At the German Chancery the removal of the pressure which Crispi had brought to bear, and which had been supported by such sound reasoning, was looked upon as a release.

Moreover, Crispi's successor in office, the Hon. di Rudinì, who was equipped with but a superficial knowledge of Italy's needs, was swayed by ill-founded prejudices, and possessed but slight personal authority. He allowed himself to be easily satisfied with evasive answers from the British Foreign Office, which had adopted the theory maintained by the British Admiralty, and had ended by declaring that neither England nor Italy had anything to fear from the fortifications at Biserta, and that, as Biserta would necessitate the splitting of the French naval forces, it would, in fact, prove a source of weakness and injury to France.

Encouraged by the remissness of the new Italian Ministry, which had initiated a foreign policy differing widely from that pursued by Crispi (over whose fall France had openly rejoiced), the government of the Republic, having gradually collected the necessary materials, began constructing fortifications in 1892, at the most northerly point on the African coast, working slowly, both in order the longer to conceal the military importance of these fortifications and to be able to deny the true nature of the undertaking upon which France had embarked regardless of the declarations she had made to the Powers when, in 1881, she forced the Bey of Tunis to accept her protectorate.

The Hon. Crispi, who had once more retired to private life, continued to follow the question with all the interest his patriotism inspired. Friends kept him posted concerning what was going forward in the Regency as regards armament. Here are some examples of the information which reached him:—

*May 29.*—Eighty cases of powder brought by French Packet Boat, *Ville de Naples*.

*May 31.*—Fifty cases of cartridges brought by French Packet Boat, *via Algiers*.

*July 3.*—Seven hundred and fifty barrels of powder brought by French Packet Boat, *Ville de Bône*.

*July 6.*—Twenty-seven cases of cartridges brought by French Packet Boat, *Ville de Rome*.

*July 10.*—Three hundred and fifty barrels of powder, each weighing five kilogrammes, brought by French Packet Boat.

In September 1891, in consequence of certain alarming newspaper reports concerning the military preparations which were being carried on by the French in Tunisia, Minister Rudinì ordered the Consul General Macchiavelli to repair to Biserta and ascertain what was being done in the fort there. Macchiavelli was repulsed by the military authorities because he was not equipped with a permit from Paris! Several newspapers pointed out that we might have spared ourselves this mortification, as there was no need to send an official representative of Italy to Biserta to ascertain what was known to every one at Tunis. One of these journals, *La Riforma*, which was Crispi's organ, expressed itself as follows on December first:

Can it be possible that the Italian government is ignorant of the fact that the Biserta fortifications are in direct contradiction with the obligations assumed by France and formally recognised by her?

And does it not propose to remind the government at Paris of these obligations?

Not being in a position to intervene in any other way, Crispi expressed his painful anxiety to the King himself, in the following letter, dated 14 February, 1892:—

SIRE,—Which is the better policy — to allow Biserta to be fortified, or to prevent the completion of her fortifications? Under my Ministry Italy chose to adopt the second of these policies.

The question was discussed both at London and Berlin.

In consequence of our protests Lord Salisbury twice demanded explanations from Waddington on this subject, and the French Ambassador most

solemnly assured His Lordship that his government did not aim at making a military port of Biserta. This fact is confirmed by a despatch received by us from Berlin on January 28, 1891.

By means of two despatches, one of August 5, the other of August 13, 1890, we were informed that, in speaking of the Tunisian question, Caprivi had said to our *chargé-d'affaires* that Germany would not neglect Italian interests, and that *should occasion offer* she would fulfil to the utmost the obligations she had contracted towards us.

Concerning this same question Count Kálnoky, on his part, made the following declaration to Count Nigra, on August 5, 1890: 'The Austro-Hungarian government is disposed to join with the other friendly Powers in any diplomatic action in favour of Italy.'

I am forced to conclude that nothing has been done during the twelve months my successor has held the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am also led to suppose that a despatch from London which reached the *Consulta* (Italian Foreign Office) after January 31, 1891, has been left unanswered. Meanwhile it is an established fact that the work of fortifying Biserta is begun!

With Biserta and Toulon the French would hold absolute mastery in the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> I once wrote to Lord Salisbury that, should this transpire, England would no longer be sure of Malta and might even be driven out of Egypt.

The danger would be still greater for us, and we should be obliged to strongly fortify Sicily and Sardinia, which points would be the first to be

<sup>1</sup> Concerning this question see the address delivered before the House on February 6, 1893, by General Dal Verme.



attacked in case of war. Nor is this all, for we should furthermore be forced to maintain numerous bodies of troops in the two largest islands of our kingdom, and keep our fleet ever cruising in African waters.

An enormous sum of money would be necessary to strongly fortify Sicily and Sardinia, which sum the Italian Treasury would find itself unable to provide. It is strange, to say the least, that at the very moment when Your Majesty's government is forced to economise to a painful extent, the government itself, by persisting in a mistaken policy, should entail fresh outlay.

My Ministry clearly demonstrated to Berlin what Biserta fortified would mean, adding that should war break out and Germany be attacked, we should be unable to avail ourselves of all our forces in her support, as the greater part would, of necessity, be localised in view of attacks which would without doubt be made upon us from the sea, and against which we must be prepared to defend ourselves.

When France occupied Tunis she promised that she would not convert it into a military post. To-day, by fortifying Biserta, the government of the Republic is not only breaking its promise, but is altering the *status quo* in the Mediterranean as well. By means of the agreements of February 12 and March 24, 1887, Great Britain, Italy, and Austria-Hungary bound themselves not to permit this alteration of the *status quo*, or, in any case, to co-operate in preventing it.

I am not bringing this question before the House because a public discussion of so serious a matter would be prejudicial to national interests. Personally, moreover, I should only thereby render myself

more odious still to the French without in any way benefiting my country. I therefore hold my peace.

Permit me, sire, to speak plainly and in all loyalty, and to point out that the silence of the House and the inaction of the Ministers do not relieve the King of his responsibility towards our common fatherland.

Constitutionally Your Majesty is not responsible for what is transpiring, but there exist moral responsibilities towards the nation whose head and guardian Your Majesty is, and the future welfare of that nation is now in danger of being compromised by the present pernicious policy.

I shall not reveal the contents of this letter of mine to a living soul. It shall remain a profound secret. The letter has been written for Your Majesty, and for Your Majesty alone.

My conscience has imposed the writing of it as a solemn duty. Once more I have wished to demonstrate my unbounded confidence in the Sovereign in whom our national unity is personified.

To this Sovereign, therefore, it was my duty to speak frankly.

I have now the honour once more to declare myself, Your Majesty's most humble and devoted servant and cousin,<sup>1</sup>

FRANCESCO CRISPI.

There is nothing to prove that the Italian government adopted any efficacious diplomatic measures in this emergency. The work in question went steadily on, and when Crispi returned to power in December 1893, it was so far advanced as to render a protest entirely useless. On March 7, 1894, in consequence of a publication announcing that the work at Biserta was begun, whereas, in reality, it was already far advanced, Ambassador Ressman demanded an explanation of

<sup>1</sup> Those who, like Crispi, have had Italy's highest order conferred upon them, become *Gran Collare della Santissima Annunziata* and 'cousins' of the King. (Translator's note.)

the President of the Council, Casimir Périer, who, relinquishing the policy of denial to which his predecessors had clung, confessed the truth; he justified the decision to fortify Biserta, however, by declaring that the concentration of Italian troops in Sicily had made this provision necessary, as if the concentration had been intended as a menace to Tunisia, whereas in reality it was due solely to the alarming conditions then prevailing in Sicily itself.

Here is Ressiman's letter :

*To His Excellency the Prime Minister.*

Under the heading 'Biserta and Spezia,' the *Figaro* has this day published on its first page an article beginning with the words: 'We are assured that orders have just been issued for beginning the military works at Biserta. We congratulate the government on this patriotic resolve.'

Referring to this article, I seized the opportunity afforded by to-day's audience to ask Monsieur Casimir Périer if there be any truth in the announcement, observing also, that on several occasions when his predecessors had been pressed for information concerning the works which the French government was carrying on in Biserta harbour, they had declared that the sole purpose of these works was that of facilitating the passage of merchant vessels into the inner lake, and that they had been undertaken for commercial ends and reasons only.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs replied that, some six weeks since, in consequence of repeated petitions from the Bey of Tunis and from Monsieur Rouvier, he had indeed issued orders to protect the entrance to Biserta Channel. He was frank enough to add that he had been finally moved to take this step by the alarm which the concentration of a large body of Italian troops in Sicily had caused here. He went

on to say that the military works at Biserta were confined to the arming of two batteries to the right and left of the channel's mouth, for which the esplanades had long since been constructed and the means of access traced, and that the amount of expense to be incurred, which was but 600,000 francs, was proof enough that no work of any great importance had been undertaken. He was of opinion, moreover, that there was no reason to consider these works in a different light from those of fortification executed at Tunis, for which 300,000 francs had been expended.

Little by little the truth was acknowledged, hidden activity was openly admitted, and the labour of fortification and armament went rapidly on.

The *Dépêche Tunisienne* published the following article on June 11, 1895:—

### Significant words!

In replying to the addresses with which he was welcomed to Biserta by the French Vice-Consul and the representatives of the town council, the syndicate of Biserta and the Harbour Company, Rear-Admiral de la Jaille, commandant of the Mediterranean squadron, so the *Courrier de Biserte* informs us, expressed his satisfaction at finding that the works which are to transform Biserta into a most valuable port for France have made such progress in so short a time.

He said that, deterred by vain pretexts, the French fleet had heretofore avoided casting anchor there, but that the charm was now broken, for, disregarding certain susceptibilities which have hitherto been humoured, the French fleet had definitely taken possession of Biserta. 'Like the cruiser *Suchet*,' he



said, 'so the ironclads of my squadron might have penetrated through the channel and entered the lake had it not been for the bank of rock some fifty metres long which is still awaiting removal, and along which the channel narrows into a passage only thirty-seven metres broad. It is but a question of time, however, for the work of removal will take but a few weeks. On its next visit the squadron, which will then be under the command of Admiral Gervais, will certainly not omit to cast anchor in the lake and even remain there some time.'

The pride with which leading French statesmen and well-known writers have since boasted of the increase in power derived by France from the creation of the military port of Biserta, suffices to prove how well grounded was Crispi's anxiety, and how culpable the indifference of his successors, in the presence of this danger.

With little tact but great sincerity a Minister of Marine, Monsieur Pelletan, declared in 1902 that Biserta was a guarantee of French supremacy in the Mediterranean.

Gabriel Hanotaux, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a work entitled *La Paix latine*, took delight in enlarging upon the difficulties overcome and in extolling the conquest accomplished. It will not be unprofitable to study the few extracts from the book which we transcribe below.

' . . . As for Italy, our relations with that country under Signor Crispi's Ministry were such as to justify us in fearing the worst.

'This general situation, the outcome of an agglomeration of circumstances most of which it was beyond the power of man to control, was frankly disastrous. In my efforts to remedy these conditions I could only follow in the footsteps of my predecessors. Those efforts were fortunately crowned with success. The Franco-Congolese incident was quickly settled. . . . At last the relations between Italy and France became less strained, but not until after a most trying period of tension, which culminated in the recall of Ambassador Ressman. A serious difficulty, however, still loomed in the future: the extinction of the conventions by which Tunisia was bound with regard to the European Powers. The fate both of the Regency and of the Mediterranean hung in the balance. But, by means of concessions on both sides, the cloud

that had gathered was dispersed. A spirit of conciliation and of yielding, which was largely due to the influence of the Marchese di Rudini and the Marchese Visconti-Venosta, animated the negotiations which finally resulted in the various agreements confirming the French protectorate in Tunisia and leaving France in free and undisputed possession of the important sea-port of Biserta. . . .

‘The vast military establishment, which has nearly reached its completion at Biserta, is of importance both to Europe and to Africa. It commands one of the world’s greatest thoroughfares. . . . Several of the great ports of antiquity were located in this region—Utica, Hippo, and, mightiest of all, Carthage. More than once has the fate of the world trembled upon this point of land where nature has dug a double lake—at once a place of refuge and a menace—whose vast expanse and depth are calculated to accommodate an armada of modern leviathans.

‘The Mediterranean is divided into two well-defined parts: one forms the lion’s head, the other his body: one, that on the west, bathes Spain and Morocco, Provence and Algeria; the other, that on the east, unites the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa; its blue waves caress Greece and her isles, Asia Minor and Egypt; by means of channels it stretches forward into the Black Sea; it finds an outlet upon the rest of the world through the Suez Canal.

‘Now these two parts meet at a point which forms, as it were, the neck of the animal, where the sea is narrowest between Sicily and the African coast. A little to the rear of this passage the island of Malta keeps watch over its outlet, but the location of Biserta, which dominates it, is still more advantageous. Biserta has the Mediterranean by the throat!

‘At this decisive point nature herself has dug a lake which offers an area of 15,000 hectares, 1300 of which are sufficiently deep to float the largest vessels. Thus one of the finest ports in the world is situated at one of the world’s most important points. *It was necessary that we should have that point and that port!*

‘Such is the undertaking to which France has devoted herself for twenty years, an undertaking she has carried through with a tenacity of purpose and a spirit of perseverance which may, perhaps, one day be reckoned to the credit of our country, so sadly misunderstood by others and so frequently discredited by herself.

‘To get Biserta we must have Tunisia; this was the first part of the undertaking. In the beginning there was no question of Biserta, our whole attention being occupied by the Kroumirs. But the European Powers, keenly alive to the importance of what was going on, sought to frustrate our intention of creating a great port at Biserta later on, and Monsieur Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, acted wisely in indefinitely postponing the project of a military establishment concerning which he was pressed with questions.

‘Overcoming numerous obstacles, Jules Ferry at last achieved his purpose; French occupation forced our protectorate upon the Regency. That very day the question of military defence was raised. It was but

natural that it should be considered one with that of the defence of Algeria. All eyes were now fixed upon Tunisia, stretching seawards and eastwards like a natural bastion.

'Where should the citadel, the *arx* of the new conquest, be established? Some, considering the turbulent spirit of the native population and the difficulties which a foreign expedition was bound to encounter should it be forced to encroach upon their territory, suggested as the centre of defence the ancient city of Thebessa, which had frequently served as a place of refuge for the threatened domination of the Romans. Others, foreseeing the expansion in Africa of the colonial empire of France towards the central regions and Lake Tsad, proposed the natural harbour of the Bay of Bougrara, which lies in the waters of the Syrtes and is protected by the island of Djerba.

'But the claims of Biserta could not be overlooked; Biserta, a point favourable alike to operations of offence or defence, equally well located as regards the sea and the land, dominating the capital, Tunis, without being hampered by that city, situated at no great distance from the mouth of the largest river in Tunisia, the Madjerda, and the terminus of the most important railway line in northern Africa, that which connects Algiers with Tunis.

'As to the military advantages this unique port affords, these have been described with the greatest precision in an essay by Lieutenant-Colonel Espitalier: "The tactical radius of action of an ironclad making 18 knots an hour around a given point, is 180 miles more or less, if it is to return to the point from which it started. Thus the tactical circle of Biserta cuts across the shores of Sicily and covers the entire passage between these shores and the African coast. It also intercepts the circle of action of English vessels at Malta. If we unite the Biserta circle with those of Mer-el-Kebir, Algiers and Ajaccio and the metropolitan ports, it becomes apparent that the entire western basin of the Mediterranean is under our tactical control, and that Biserta is the key to all operations on the east."

'These arguments strengthened the favourable impression which the geographical position and the natural advantages of the spot had already produced in the minds of many. But how were we to free ourselves from obligations assumed, how outwit the watchfulness of rival diplomacies, which held the future of Biserta in suspense? History will one day more fully illumine these points.

'In the beginning the sole idea was to transform the half-abandoned port of *Benzert*, which was as old as the Spanish conquest, into a fishing and trading harbour, which should at least be accessible. It was thus that, for the simplest reason in the world, the first stroke of the pick fell, and the work of broadening and regulating the channel was begun.

'But even for this first apparently unimportant undertaking, money was necessary, and money was obtained by means of a clever device. Biserta itself would provide for the future of Biserta.

'In these lakes, opening out of the Mediterranean like great natural



breeding-places, the fish go back and forward at regular intervals and at fixed hours. A formidable army of fishes of various sorts passes steadily in and out, sweeping through the narrow passage at the channel's neck like a living torrent.

'A monopoly of the fisheries at Biserta formed one of the main advantages of the concession granted to the firm of Hersent & Couvreur, on condition that they would immediately begin work on the trading harbour.

'Thus did the inexhaustible riches brought by the tide itself straighten the channel, build the first quay, and carry far out into the sea those great blocks of stone upon which the first mole would rise. Living flesh became stone, and upon these foundations Biserta rests to-day.

'Gradually the original scheme was expanded, or rather the labour which had long been pursued in secret could at last be carried on in the light of day.

'In 1897 Europe was as watchful as she is to-day of the Eastern question which appeared about to be raised. Amidst the many difficulties and consequent delays which beset the European Concert, the question of Crete was painfully working its way towards a peaceful solution. The moment appeared favourable for a definite adjustment of the Tunis question and for the final deliverance of Biserta.

'And so, out of this formidable conflict between sentiment and interest, France gained at least one positive advantage. Her naval authority in the Mediterranean was enormously strengthened by this "duplicate" of Toulon. Henceforth, to use the words of Admiral Gervais, "next door to Tunis the White there would be Biserta the Strong!"

'Since that time the lakes have been the scene of great activity. Instead of a breadth of one hundred metres, the channel now numbers two hundred. Great walls have been carried far out into the sea, and on them rests a mole from seventeen to twenty metres deep. These walls form an immense outer harbour, and must, under any circumstances, ensure the free circulation of French vessels while preventing the forcing of the passage by a hostile fleet as happened at Santiago, and the "bottling up" of the French fleet, which would here be sheltered but not enclosed.

'Spacious dry-docks have been constructed within the harbour, while farther on stands the arsenal, behind which are the fortifications, crowning the summits of surrounding hills, defending the interior and darkly menacing the sea. Only a regular siege, maintained by a formidable fleet and army, could possibly overcome the resistance which Biserta is even now prepared to offer. I know of no spectacle more imposing, more marvellous than that presented at sunset by this vast expanse of smooth green, with the formidable fortresses of Djebel-Kebir and Djebel-Rouma looming in the distance.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the French of G. Hanotaux, *La Paix latine: Bizerte*, page 275 and following.



# ITALY AND AUSTRIA

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ITALO-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS AND IRREDENTISM

The birth of anti-Austrian Irredentism—The campaign of 1866—Andrássy's point of view and the task of diplomacy—The Irredentist movement in 1899—Declarations in Parliament and corresponding diplomatic policy followed by Crispi—Dissolution of the Committee *pro* Trent and Triest—Francis Joseph's opinion of Crispi—The Emperor regrets not being able to come to Rome—The Ulmann trial; how it came to be abandoned by the Austrian Government—The dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society and of the *Dante Alighieri*—Crispi protests—The Crispi-Nigra correspondence—Irredentist agitation—Dissolution of the Oberdank and Barsanti clubs—The *Pro Patria* allowed to re-form as the *Lega Nazionale*—Austria and Crispi's resignation in 1891—Trouble in Istria in 1894—Crispi is successful in obtaining the intervention of Emperor William—Ambassador Lanza—Kálnoky withdraws from office.

ANTI-AUSTRIAN Irredentism sprang into being on the morrow of the unfortunate campaign of 1866. As is well known, on July 25 of that year Garibaldi's advance was arrested upon the heights of Trent, and he was induced to withdraw across the frontier, by a telegram from the Chief of the General Staff and His Majesty's Privy Councillor, General Lamarmora, which declared that 'the political conditions demanded the immediate conclusion of an armistice' and the withdrawal of Garibaldi's troops from Tyrol. Garibaldi obeyed reluctantly, and the country persisted in the conviction that, had it not been for the inexplicable inconsistency with which the war was conducted and the over-hasty conclusion of peace, Italy would have obtained recognition of her natural boundaries, the Julian Alps.

'One evening,' so Crispi wrote, 'our talk fell upon

the war of 1866. I asked him (Prince Bismarck) why he had not raised his voice in support of Italy's endeavours to obtain possession of Trent. He replied: "The question of the cession of territory was dealt with by the two Emperors, Napoleon and Francis Joseph, and settled by them, before the conclusion of peace and without our intervention."

'It is clearly apparent,' Crispi adds, 'that Napoleon's intervention in our affairs in 1866 once more resulted in disaster to the work of Italian unification. Prussia was not free to act, nor were we ourselves. Venetia was ceded only as she is included within the limits of the administrative frontier, and we were thus debarred from obtaining possession of the Western Alps.'

We have given an account elsewhere of the phases through which the Irredentist movement passed. In the beginning (1868) it had its headquarters at Palmanova, near the Austrian frontier, and possessed an organ, the *Confine Orientale d'Italia* (Italy's Eastern Boundary) which appeared for the first time at Udine in January 1870. We have also alluded incidentally to Crispi's exertions on behalf of Austrian subjects of Italian nationality. We now propose to demonstrate by means of documents, with what discretion Crispi, while in power, directed the Italo-Austrian relations, relations of a most delicate nature, which the propaganda of the Irredentist movement and the excessive severity of the Austrian political police rendered it exceedingly difficult to preserve.

It must be noted that Crispi never dreamed that the Italians would withdraw their demand for the establishment of the natural boundary line between their territory and the Austrian Empire. He realised the weakness of a state whose frontiers are open, and frequently deplored the fact that successive Italian ministries had failed to avail themselves of favourable opportunities of finally settling the question which had been left undecided in 1866. A private letter of July 1, 1891, reveals Crispi's intention of again raising this question on the

occasion of the renewal of the Triple Alliance. Having so signally raised the standing of Italy, and himself obtained the respectful consideration and confidence of the Austrian government, Crispi entertained high hopes of success. But, as we all know, he fell from office on January 31, 1891, about eighteen months before the expiration of the treaty (30 May, 1892). In the letter above-mentioned Crispi said :—

‘In 1882 they would not allow us to join their league because our army was not sufficiently strong, and also because they mistrusted us both on account of the Irredentist element in the Cabinet and of the campaign of 1866, which was not forgotten.

‘To-day they want us, and the alliance with Italy is popular both in Berlin and Vienna. Why is this? Because of the one million two hundred thousand soldiers we can place in the field, and of the certainty they have acquired that we will do our duty.

‘In renewing the treaty, we might have let them feel the value of our strength. This might have and should have been done, and in compensation we could have demanded the rectification of our frontiers. Had we known how to act we might have obtained this concession. Vienna was prepared for the demand, and Berlin would have brought pressure to bear upon Vienna.’

It is certain, indeed, that Austria will never surrender the Tyrol save under pressure of exceptional circumstances. But when, in 1891, Crispi resigned the direction of Foreign Affairs to the Hon. di Rudinì that state of mind in Austrian official circles which had prompted the Chancellor of the Empire, Count Andrassy, to write the following letter to the Imperial Ambassador at Rome, Count Wimpffen, on March 24, 1874, was already a thing of the remote past.

Andrassy had then expressed himself in the following terms :—

Reports have reached us from various sources of

the policy adopted by a part of the Italian press of seeking to encourage certain malcontents at Triest and in the neighbourhood of Trent. Your recent conversation with Signor Visconti-Venosta on this subject, an account of which is contained in your private letter to me of April 18, affords me an opportunity, which I gladly seize, of acquainting you with my views.

I am firmly convinced that any ambitious project of annexation would encounter, both now and in the future, the decided disapproval of the King and his Ministers, and we cannot but be grateful to the Italian government for its unhesitating condemnation of all propaganda having this in view. I believe that it would be of great advantage to both countries if we could arrange to co-operate in checking a movement which enjoys the support of a part of the Italian press, and of which the worst feature is that it encourages that party which is hostile to the friendly relations now existing between Austria-Hungary and Italy.

I feel that in discussing this matter with Italian statesmen we should seek to see it, not from our own point of view, but from their own. It is this side of the question which the following observations are intended to illumine.

It would appear that a certain advanced party in Italy, hoping to obtain territorial advantages at our expense, confuses the conditions that prevailed at the time of the unification of Italy with those prevailing to-day.

At the time when the Emperor Napoleon, still firmly seated upon his throne, was willing to lend his support to the nation's ardent desires, when Austria, finding herself isolated, without alliances and con-



fronted by a hostile Germany and a Russia still resentfully mindful of the attitude we had maintained during the Crimean War, was obliged to defend the provinces she possessed in Italy against the national sentiment, at that time, I repeat, it was no difficult matter to provoke a crusade against foreign occupation which was declared an outrage to the soil itself, and the cry of 'Italy from Sea to Sea' was well calculated to inflame the spirits of many, even beyond the frontiers of the peninsula.

But of all the conditions which then kept the movement alive not one has survived. We need not go into details to prove that the situation is radically changed.

For her part Austria-Hungary has no intention of reasserting her claims to the provinces she once possessed in Italy.

To-day the friendly relations prevailing between the two nations rest upon mutual recognition of the territorial circumscriptions as established by the treaties. These may have been traced with justice or not, but the existing boundaries form the inalterable basis for the conservation of friendly relations between the two countries. Should any party, taking the common language as an excuse, presume to demand the cession of southern Tyrol or of part of our sea-coast, would not Austria herself be justified in demanding the 'Quadrilateral' as being indispensable to the defence of her territory? To resume the discussion of any such question would mean to acknowledge, *a priori*, the right of the strongest Power.

Under conditions so radically altered, perseverance in a movement such as that against which the Imperial and Royal Government was forced to struggle

in former days, is no longer justified either by the needs or interests of Italy.

It is, nevertheless, no rare thing to hear opinions expressed which reveal a tendency to disregard the inviolability of the new territorial conditions. Certain journals, especially, appear to make it their business to encourage vain hopes in those who regard with greedy eyes a tract of land situated on this side of our boundary line.

It is true enough that some of these journals invoke an amicable adjustment, rather than a solution of the problem by force of arms. But must I repeat that we could never consent to a modification of the present order of things, as established by the treaties? In the first place, the very principle involved would forbid our doing so. Should we once consent to any alteration based on ethnographical delimitations, other similar claims would immediately be advanced, which we could no longer refuse to recognise. We could not, indeed, surrender to Italy those of our subjects who are connected with her by linguistical affinities without artificially provoking, in the border regions of our Empire, a centrifugal movement towards the sister nations established in such close proximity to our frontiers. Such a movement would compel us either to resign ourselves to the loss of those provinces, or to incorporate the neighbouring countries, which would not be inconsistent with the system of nationality. To admit any such principle would be equivalent to sacrificing the integrity of the Monarchy, or to deviating from the policy of the preservation of peace and of the *status quo* which we have elected to follow both in our own interest and that of Europe in general.

Let us rather pause to consider whither this idea of ethnographical boundaries would lead should it be generally accepted. Should such a question be raised between Austria-Hungary and Germany, for instance, where should we find a *stopping-place*, and could the matter fail to become a source of grave conflict? What would happen if similar claims were advanced by Germany and Russia; among the Slav races that are wedged in between German territories; among the populations of various origin that inhabit the Ottoman Empire, which, scattered and intermingled as they are, form territorial groups of the strangest description, calculated to frustrate any attempt at tracing a rational frontier? It is evident that only a universal conflict could result from such discussions.

A work of decomposition and reconstruction, such as certain utopians dream of, would but provoke innumerable acts of violence and rivalry, and thus compromise the general peace and safety.

Certainly the current from which the great national agglomerations have sprung had its controlling reason; but, now that they are constituted, should we attempt to resume this work *en sous-œuvre*, and minutely carry out the application of ethnology to politics, we should but destroy the European order which has been painfully evolved through much suffering, and evoke a state of chaos.

It will be unnecessary to enlarge upon these arguments with the enlightened statesmen now in power in Italy.

To-day, when there no longer exists in Austria-Hungary a party aspiring to redeem the Empire's former possessions in Italy; to-day, when the

nation, forgetting past dissensions, regards Italy, as she is now constituted, as an essential guarantee for the peace of Europe and the preservation of the balance of power ; to-day, that territory which Italy might wish to appropriate at our expense could be of but little value as compared with the advantages accruing to her from her friendly relations with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, I am firmly convinced that His Majesty the King and his counsellors as well share these views in full. The preceding remarks, therefore, contain no shade of reproof as regards them. I have wished to emphasise these arguments solely for the purpose of persuading them to join with us in combating the dangers deriving from annexationist agitation, and which threaten the friendly relations prevailing between our two nations.

We are far from wishing to demand guarantees against such agitation from the Italian government : our Monarchy would find in its own strength the remedy for any evil such agitation might create. Nor have we any intention of making His Majesty's Government responsible for the independent Press : we have learned by experience how unreasonable it is to blame the authorities of a country for the aberrations of its Press.

All that we desire is that the Italian Ministers should exert what influence they may possess over certain organs, for the purpose of checking the propaganda in question. I believe that once the considerations above set forth have been submitted to their attention they will find a means of turning the current of public opinion in the direction which the new situation demands.



Count Andrassy's arguments were not without weight as regards Irredentism in its broader sense, that is to say, should the movement be extended and made to embrace all those parts of the Empire where Italian is spoken; but, on the other hand, they could have but little force when the demand was only for the recognition of the boundary line which Nature herself has established for Italy.<sup>1</sup> Crispi was of opinion that, as the unyielding sentiments which Austria had once entertained towards Italy no longer prevailed, it would now be possible for Italian diplomacy, working on this more limited basis and under favourable conditions, to bring that country to regard the problem in a more just light.

But while he confidently entrusted this task to diplomacy, he was firmly convinced that popular demonstrations only retarded the desired solution, and compromised higher

<sup>1</sup> It should be borne in mind, with regard to the geographical and historical *union* of the country now known as the Tyrol, that in reality this union never existed. Its political union is another matter. But even this does not date back farther than 1802, when the great raid upon the ecclesiastical principalities took place, and it was furthermore suspended between 1808 and 1815, during which years Trent with its surrounding territory formed part of the Napoleonic kingdom of Italy, and was known as the *Department of the Upper-Adige*. In 1180 the Bavarian house of Wittelsbach held German Tyrol, that is to say Tyrol proper, as procurators (but without the rights of sovereignty) for the prince-bishops of Trent and Bressanone. In 1363 German Tyrol passed into the hands of Albert III. of Hapsburg and his brothers, as heirs of Margaret Maultasche. In 1395 we find it held by Duke Ferdinand IV. of the Styrian branch. In 1496 Emperor Maximilian I. is in possession, and with his descendants it remained until the Styria-Tyrol line was summoned to assume imperial honours (1619), when the region was definitely assigned to Emperor Leopold I. (1665). Throughout all these changes of domination the *Trentino* is never mentioned either as an integral part or as a dependency of the Tyrol, to which country, as we have already stated, it was not annexed until 1802, at the time of the suppression of the ecclesiastical principalities. It must be observed that on this same occasion Austria also acquired the archiepiscopal principality of Salzburg, but that unlike the episcopal-principalities of Trent and Bressanone, instead of being incorporated with the neighbouring arch-duchy of Austria, the territory became an autonomous domain or rather province as it is to-day, having a Diet and administration of its own. Finally, as further proof that before 1802 the *Trentino* was never considered, either geographically or politically, as forming an integral part of the Tyrol, we would add that, in Article 93 of the final treaty signed at Vienna in 1815, and containing an enumeration of the provinces and territories over which the sovereignty of the Emperor of Austria and of his heirs and successors is recognised, the 'Principalities of Bressanone and Trent, and the County of Tyrol' are mentioned singly and separately, and not as an incorporate whole.

interests. He was therefore opposed to reckless Irredentism, not only in its noisy manifestations and secret designs, but also when it revealed its activity in moments of exasperation, for which Austria herself was sometimes responsible owing to the acts of retaliation and repression of which her hostile and imprudent political police was frequently guilty. While his very presence inspired a general sense of confidence in the firmness and loyalty of the Italian government, Crispi laboured on to achieve his wise and patriotic purpose.

In 1889 the Irredentist movement, making every incident an excuse and gaining impetus from every severe or arbitrary measure adopted by the Austrian authorities, had spread over the greater part of Italy. Rome and Milan were the two most important centres of active propaganda, in which the leading members of the radical party participated, some influenced by their fierce nationalism, others by their blind devotion to France, but one and all working to create such a state of discord and antagonism between Austria and Italy as should make the dissolution of the Triple Alliance unavoidable.

In May and June the deputies Imbriani and Cavallotti contrived to spout Irredentism from the benches of the House itself, taking as an excuse the attitude the Consul-General at Trieste, Durando, had assumed towards a certain Italian notary. The Hon. Crispi having ordered an inquiry, a lengthy discussion took place on June 10, over the report presented to the House; and as the assembly had been deeply stirred by the note of patriotism which the speakers of the opposition had not failed to strike, Crispi decided it would be well to bring the discussion to a close by a clear and unequivocal vote, which followed a motion of confidence in the government's policy proposed by the aged member, Cavalletto. Crispi's most intimate convictions, as well as his prudence as a statesman, stand revealed in the following extracts from the speech he delivered on this occasion :—

‘Those hon. members who were the authors of the motion, will see from this reply of Piccoli's that the accusation brought against Durando is absolutely devoid of foundation.

‘Doubtless they regret these negative results. They had hoped, I know not for what advantage to be derived from the fact, that Durando would appear in the light of an informer, and that Piccoli would be proved an Irredentist.

‘The question at issue between Durando and Piccoli is not a fiscal one, and Piccoli did well to declare that, in this matter, neither Durando nor any one else was influenced by motives of a mercenary nature.

‘The question, gentlemen, is one of jurisdiction. The point to be decided was, whether with regard to subjects of ours, dying in foreign lands, the Italian law should hold, or that of the country of their demise prevail. This was the true and only point of dissension. (Comment.)

‘The provisions of the Convention of May 15, 1874, which Durando’s predecessors in office have most unwisely omitted to apply, established the rule which still holds good (and Consular Conventions of a like nature have, moreover, been concluded with all civilised countries), that upon the death of a subject of ours in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Consul, or his substitute, shall be present at the opening of the will, and participate in the consequent acts, such acts to be performed only with his sanction, he being invested with supreme authority as the guardian of our fellow-countrymen.

‘Now what did the other side demand? That the Austrian law be applied to Italian subjects, and this for reasons of equality. This, gentlemen, is a strange form of Irredentism indeed, and I must congratulate those who uphold such a theory! But according to legal principles in general, and also

according to the principle of national dignity, in all questions in which the individual is concerned, the law of the land of birth must prevail. *Civis Romanus sum*, and no matter in what part of the world I may be, the law of my country must be respected, and Consul Durando, in the case now under consideration, was but defending Italy and her laws. (Applause.)

‘ . . . Certain members of the consular corps have adopted methods which I cannot regard with unqualified approval. The corps undoubtedly contains many brave and clever men who are sensible of the national dignity, and who, like every other good Italian, take a lively interest in the affairs of their country. But there are others whose methods and prejudices are of another epoch.

‘ The various elements, gentlemen, of which the consular corps is composed, have been derived in part from the former consular corps of the Italian administrations now abolished, under which they received a training differing widely from that imparted by us. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if there are among them those who expose themselves to censure by acts which they themselves consider well calculated alike to display their own zeal and further our interests in the countries to which they are accredited. (Comment.)

‘ How often have I not encountered these mistaken principles and striven by every means to overcome them !

‘ At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only French was spoken when I assumed office. The cipher was in French, and all correspondence was carried on in that language. I began by altering all this. An Italian cipher is now in use, and the correspondence



is carried on in Italian. In doing this, I was but following the example of other powers. England, Germany, and Spain—each of these countries uses its own language; it is but right that we should use ours.

‘The ciphers used by Germany and other powers are in the language of the country; it is but just that ours should be in Italian.

‘This is, of course, a mere matter of form, but form is here very closely allied to substance. The national tongue is a great factor in nationality. The necessity of writing his own language reminds our representative of his country in its most noble and glorious aspect, which is that of its language. (Applause.) But, gentlemen, this is not all.

‘In some places our consuls and representatives give their own children an education which is not Italian, even sending them to foreign schools, and it is, therefore, hardly to be expected that they will grow up with Italian sentiments.

‘. . . The peace of Europe is based upon treaties. We, like honest men, will respect these treaties, and, should any seek to violate them, we shall know how to do our duty.

‘When the illustrious Marco Minghetti was a member of this assembly, he once said, in the course of a political discussion in which he displayed all that brilliancy of language and clearness of ideas for which he was distinguished, that, as regards the question of nationality, it is necessary to choose the most favourable opportunity, but that, should this question ever be revived, should a war result in alterations to the map of Europe, Italy would have little to fear, for while we have nothing to yield, we

might have much to gain and receive. (Enthusiastic applause.)

‘But while such are the principles by which every patriot should be animated, be his place upon yonder benches (pointing to the members’ seats) or upon one of these (pointing to the ministers’ benches), the crowning virtue by which states and statesmen alike should be governed is prudence! (Applause from the Right and Centre.)

‘Hon. Marselli (interrupting)—And faith!

‘Crispi—The virtue of prudence led us to Rome! (Loud applause from the Right and Centre.) It was by prudence that this great unity of ours was built up, a unity which all envy, but which, unfortunately, all have not yet learnt to respect. Our position is assailed by many enemies, and one of the most active of these, dwelling in our very midst, would rejoice could it succeed, by its wiles, in rending asunder the league of the three Powers upon which the world’s peace rests. With relentless activity this enemy is ever seeking to ensnare us, encouraged, alas, at times, and at times even assisted, by certain other Powers. (Comments and interruptions.)

‘Let us therefore calmly await the development of events, and, while waiting, let us respect those treaties which, I repeat, are the foundation upon which the world’s peace is established. This is our first duty. We have fulfilled it hitherto, and we will fulfil it in the future.’ (Enthusiastic applause.)

A second interpellation by Cavallotti was the object of fresh discussion at the Chamber on July 8. This interpellation dealt especially with two facts: (1) the Austrian authorities’ refusal to allow a party of Italian excursionists to land at Riva, on the Lake of Garda; and (2) the protracted detention

of a certain journalist by the name of Ulmann. The Prime Minister's reply to Cavallotti's violent speech on this occasion was calm and to the point. He had, he said, received no precise information concerning Ulmann, who had declared himself to be an Austrian subject, whereas he had, in reality, obtained Italian citizenship. The refusal to allow the party of excursionists to land, Crispi explained by stating that a telegram from Ambassador Nigra had informed him that, on June 23, a similar party which had come ashore at Riva had 'failed to respect the laws of the land and had marched through the streets shouting, *Viva la Repubblica! Viva Trento e Trieste irredente!*' (Hurrah for the Republic! Hurrah for Trent and Trieste unredeemed!)

But while thus publicly exculpating the Austrian government from the accusations brought against it—all of which were exaggerated—and emphasising the necessity of acting with dignity and prudence by reminding the Hon. Cavallotti that he had 'extolled the alliance with Germany in prose and in verse,' both before and after the year 1875, and that on April 9, 1878, he had advised Count Corti in favour of that alliance, the Hon. Crispi, nevertheless, did not neglect his duty as a patriot in discussing the matter with the Austrian government.

(Confidential.)

ROME, 2 July, 1889.

*To the Italian Embassy, Vienna.*

The papers state that a party of our subjects who were on a pleasure trip were refused permission to land at Riva, on the Lake of Garda. This incident, occurring simultaneously with the suspension of the steamboat service between Venice and Trieste, has produced an unfavourable impression on the general public in Italy, and certainly one from which Austria will have nothing to gain. It furthermore places His Majesty's Government in an awkward position, especially should the matter be brought before the Chamber. You will, therefore, kindly demand an explanation of this episode,

and, in case the orders were issued from Vienna, take the steps necessary to obtain their revocation. These are police measures which I had hoped had ceased for all time. His Majesty's Government has overlooked facts of far greater importance, such as the manifestations in favour of the *Papa-Re* (the Pope-King).

A prompt answer will be welcome. CRISPI.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 13 July, 1889.

I have requested Kálnoky to obtain information concerning the Ulmann trial. He has promised to do so from the Ministry of Justice, and to communicate it to me, but he pointed out that no consuls, save those in the East, have any right to ask the judicial authorities for information concerning criminal proceedings which are pending. As for the arguments contained in Your Excellency's despatch, I laid them before Count Kálnoky in the course of a friendly conversation, and he fully realises the situation and appreciates your efforts to suppress Irredentist agitation, but, on the other hand, he declared that, to spare the guilty simply because they enjoy the protection of the party opposed to the alliance, would be not only unjust but also establish a very undesirable precedent. NIGRA.

On July 17 the Committee of the radical Irredentist party for Trent and Trieste published the following manifesto, signed by Giovanni Bovio, Matteo Imbriani, Antonio Fratti, and others.

#### ITALIANS!

When governments and parliaments forget the rights and duties of the nation, from the great soul of the people there bursts a cry in which all the rights and duties of the moment are epitomised; the cry of *Trieste and Trent!*



It is the instinct of the collective body, it is the national conscience which shouts these names aloud at the proper, historical moment.

The danger is grave and immediate.

We are bound by obligations of which we ignore the nature. We are aware only that an odious alliance binds us to our enemies.

Italy is threatened with a war in which she will be forced to participate for the good of others, and against her own interests, which war, whether she be victorious or conquered, will leave her the slave of the foreigner.

Meanwhile we live enslaved, as if condemned to perpetual servitude.

But of our own affairs we ourselves must be the arbiters.

Let us avail ourselves of every means within our reach ; public opinion may prevent great disaster, and all will be forced to respect the determination of the people.

Let us forestall the dangers that threaten. Let us form a mighty league in the name of Trieste and of Trent. This motto, this cry that stirs us is a note of warning, is the bugle-call that unites us !

ROME, 17 *July*, 1889.

#### NOTICE !

The patriotic and political workmen's associations, the societies of veterans and of soldiers having participated in our country's wars, labourers' clubs and all those among the patriots who desire to promote the country's welfare and are prepared to respond to the present appeal, are hereby invited to forward their declarations of adhesion without delay, and to take immediate steps for the constitution in their respective districts of Committees and Centres of Action, all having the same programme, and all being in direct communication with that Central Committee at Rome, whence they will receive the necessary instructions concerning the task towards whose accomplishment they are to contribute.

Communications to be despatched to the following address only :

Committee for Trieste and Trent,  
Rome.

The Hon. Crispi not only prohibited the posting of this manifesto, but dissolved the Committee as well, to the great indignation of the democratic party, who protested loudly, and voted to prosecute the police authorities, four-and-twenty lawyers, all members of the Radical Club, among whom were Barzilai, Gallini, Vendemini, and Pellegrini, being appointed to formulate the act.

By means of a circular published on July 19, Crispi forbade the assemblies for which the secret executive commission of the Irredentist Committee had everywhere made arrangements.

Nevertheless, the excitement ran high which the *Pro Trent* and *Trieste* Committees, themselves the offspring of the radical party, had aroused, and the attempts to organise demonstrations against Austria were continuous. But Crispi was firmly resolved to forestall or suppress them. On July 22 he telegraphed to the Prefect of Ravenna complaining that the authors of certain seditious outcries, uttered at an Irredentist meeting at Conselice, had not been consigned to the judicial authorities, adding that 'such omissions were not only injurious to the government's prestige but also emboldened those whose purpose it was to disturb the public order.'

It was after this act of rigour that the Hon. Crispi telegraphed as follows to Berlin:—

(Private.)

ROME, 29/7/89.

*The Italian Embassy, Berlin.*

In your despatch of July 25, Your Excellency alluded to the favourable impression produced in Berlin by the decree dissolving the Committee *Pro Trent* and *Trieste*. I did what I considered my duty. I cannot but feel, however, that the Austrian authorities are neither wise nor prudent in their dealings with Italians who are the subjects of the Empire. Petty persecutions and political trials are of no use, and serve only to exasperate. I therefore desire Your Excellency will beg the Prince Chancellor in my name to exhort Vienna to act with greater prudence and moderation. A more lenient attitude towards her Italian subjects on the part of Austria would greatly facilitate my task of dealing with the Irredentists.

CRISPI.

Prince Bismarck did not refuse his intervention.

(Private.)

BERLIN, 7 August, 1889.

*To His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

The Chancellor, to whom the message contained in Your Excellency's telegram of July 29

was duly communicated, being desirous of complying with your request in so far as is possible, has despatched secret instructions to Prince Reuss to avail himself of a favourable opportunity, and speak privately to Count Kálnoky on the delicate subject of greater moderation and prudence on the part of the Austrian authorities in dealing with Italians who are subjects of the Empire. In treating of this matter, the above-named ambassador must therefore carefully avoid all appearance of official intervention, in order that no suspicion may be aroused of any intention on the part of the Berlin Cabinet of either directly or indirectly bringing pressure to bear upon the Austro-Hungarian government, for such a suspicion would but enhance the difficulties of Your Excellency's task in dealing with the Irredentists.

LAUNAY.

Meanwhile the Irredentist cause, which enjoyed the support of the radical party, continued to distract the country. It is difficult to establish what connection there was between this movement and those secret intrigues which the French government has never ceased to carry on in Italy. The political authorities in all the greater cities were of opinion that the Irredentists were the recipients both of moral support and pecuniary aid from France.

On the ninth and again on the twelfth of August the Prefect of Naples, Senator Codronchi, telegraphed as follows to the Minister of the Interior :—

(*August 9.*) Imbriani, supported by Cavallotti, is working to enrol a number of young men, with whom it is proposed to attempt an invasion of Austrian territory, for the sole purpose of disturbing the friendly relations now prevailing between this country and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Arms are being collected.

(*August 12.*) I desire to state, in continuation of my last despatch, that the Deputy Imbriani has recently been to France to arrange for the enrolments which are being clandestinely carried on, and which are to provide men for a raid upon Dalmatia. . . . A lively correspondence is being carried on between Paris and Milan, and visits are being continually exchanged.

The Hon. Crispi did everything in his power to frustrate these insane projects. He placed a strong guard along the frontier, and finally succeeded in convincing the leaders of the fruitlessness of their endeavours.

On September 13, a certain Enrico Caporali made an attempt upon Crispi's life, the large cobble-stone which he threw hitting the Minister in the face. It was rumoured that the legal inquiry concerning this attempt had revealed the fact that Caporali had frequented the secret meetings organised by Imbriani. Be this as it may, similar acts of violence are usually the fruit of intense political excitement, and the campaign that his enemies had been carrying on against Crispi for months on account of his firmness in combating the Irredentists, was certainly not unconnected with this outrage.

On the occasion of a banquet given in Florence in his honour on October 8, Crispi made certain trenchant declarations on the subject of Irredentism.

‘For some time past, he said, ‘a dangerous movement has been seeking, by means of insidious language, to mislead and inflame the spirit of the people. I allude to that movement which clamours for the redemption of Italian lands which do not belong to the kingdom. Our adversaries use this ideal to create disturbances, and it is indeed an ideal well calculated to inflame those weak and unreflective minds which, nevertheless, are prone to generous enthusiasms. Surrounded as it appears to be by the



ardent poetry of patriotism, Irredentism is the most dangerous of those errors by which Italy is to-day distracted.'

Crispi then went on to enlarge upon this theme, clearly demonstrating that Italy's policy could not be ruled exclusively by the principle of nationality; that disarmament and war, towards which the Irredentists were straining, were but antithetical terms, which would lead Italy to the loss both of unity and liberty; that the alliance with Austria, which had saved us from isolation, had also saved us from Austria herself in 1882, and was a strong guarantee of peace. He concluded by exhorting the country to place its faith in the treaties, and by an allusion to the 'virtue of silence,' which the policy best adapted to our needs had imposed upon us.

Austria, while fully appreciating Crispi's political firmness and loyalty, was well aware, nevertheless, that he, the offspring of the revolution, was a man of strong convictions who would never allow the interests of his own country to be made subservient to those of Austria. The statesman was esteemed alike for his ability and patriotism. In his despatch of August 14, containing particulars of Emperor Francis Joseph's visit to Berlin, Ambassador de Launay reported a conversation His Majesty had had with the Secretary of State.

'The Emperor of Austria expressed his satisfaction that our August Sovereign was supported by a Prime Minister of such ability. His Imperial Majesty fully realises the importance of the alliance with Italy, especially as regards the maintenance of peace. Count Kálnoky will make every effort to regulate the attitude to be maintained towards the Italian subjects of the Empire.'

The *Fremdenblatt*, the official organ of the Austrian Chancery, published the following article on the occasion of the attempt upon Crispi's life :—

Since the criminal attack upon the person of the Italian Prime Minister, of which, happily, the consequences have not been serious,

the illustrious statesman has been made the object of innumerable demonstrations of admiration and sympathy. The messages of condolence sent by Sovereigns and Ministers have borne witness to the high esteem in which he is held in foreign lands. In his own country the authorities of the principal cities, the societies, associations, and private citizens who have shown by telegrams and addresses how thoroughly they appreciate the worth of such a man as Crispi, have but followed in this the example set them by the Monarch himself, whose affectionate and repeated inquiries concerning his Premier's condition, do honour alike to King and Minister. The youth who, as he himself confesses, flung the stone with intent to kill, has but set in motion a current of sympathy calculated to reveal the true importance of the personage he had singled out as his victim. Crispi's importance does not rest in his superior political abilities alone, nor yet in his high intelligence, his presence of mind, his resoluteness and indefatigable activity. No, it rests rather in the fact that he has devoted all of these qualities to the service of a great cause, that he (and herein lies the unquestionable proof of his exceptional political talents) has become the fearless guide along that road which he himself was amongst the first to recognise as the one that must be travelled. . . .

Now, indeed, is Italy truly independent! Italy, bound by no master, who, free of her actions, has joined, like the great Power she is, in a league of great Powers! With this evolution Crispi's name is closely associated . . . more closely indeed than that of any other statesman. He represents this newest Italy, and his position among the statesmen of Europe is a standard by which Italy's position in Europe may be judged.

From Crispi's Diary :

1890, 13 *October*.

Baron von Bruck, who has returned to Rome after the vacation, came to see me this morning towards eleven o'clock.

He said he had twice seen Emperor Francis Joseph, once in July, and again in this month of October, shortly before his return to Italy.

The Emperor expressed a desire to see our King more frequently. If our Sovereign would invite him to the military manœuvres, the Emperor would gladly accept. These visits might take place once a year, and be returned by our King's going to the military manœuvres in Austria.

As the Sovereigns would naturally be accompanied

by their Ministers, these visits would provide opportunities for the interchange of communications and views. Such an arrangement would be most advantageous, as it would not only render the relations between the Sovereigns more cordial, but also enable the two Ministers to become more intimately acquainted.

The Emperor fully understands that these visits, paid upon the scene of the manœuvres, would not relieve him of the obligation of returning the visit of our Sovereign, which has been owing since His Majesty's trip to Vienna in 1881.

The Emperor is aware that this visit should be repaid in Rome. This, however, is impossible, owing to his relations with the Vatican. Should His Imperial and Royal Majesty come to Rome, the Pope would not receive him, and the Austrian Monarch cannot expose himself to any such affront. He would be forced to break with the head of the Church, and he is bound to avoid bringing about an event of such importance.

Francis Joseph spoke of me to von Bruck in most flattering terms. He remarked that my conduct in resolutely supporting the alliance by which the two States are bound together, ensures peace and guarantees the welfare of both nations. His Majesty charged von Bruck with his compliments and especial congratulations to me.

At seven p.m. von Bruck returned to read me a despatch from Kálnoky which had arrived in the course of the afternoon. The Minister complimented me upon my speech delivered at Florence, of which he expressed a most flattering opinion.

Here is the text of Count Kálnoky's despatch :

‘I beg Your Excellency to express to Signor Crispi my most enthusiastic congratulations on his Florence speech, and to tell him that by his able and logically irrefutable exposition of the political interests of Italy, he has demonstrated not only to his own country, but to the whole of Europe as well, how absolutely correct is his policy. Italy and her international position will be greatly benefited by this exposition.

‘His bold language, which is also that of a true statesman, must be considered by Italy’s allies, who have inscribed upon their banners respect for their treaties and for monarchical principles, as a fresh proof that the Triple Alliance, which is of such importance to the peace of Europe, reposes upon a solid basis, and possesses in the prudent and energetic person of Crispi a faithful guardian, and one who is prepared to face any emergency.’

The following correspondence shows how eager Crispi was to eliminate all cause for dissension between Italy and Austria, and how willing Count Kálnoky and also the German Chancery were to second his efforts.

(Private.)

ROME, 3/9/1889.

*The Italian Embassy, Vienna.*

I beg Your Excellency to be so good as to take steps and use all your personal influence to induce the Imperial Government to accelerate, as far as possible, the course of the judicial proceedings in the Ulmann case. Whatever the sentence may eventually be, it is for the interest of both countries that this trial, which is a permanent source of discord, and which may even give rise to fresh and serious trouble, should be brought to a speedy close.



I should be gratified if you could obtain some formal assurance before leaving. Kindly telegraph me.

CRISPI.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 3/9/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Immediately upon receipt of Your Excellency's telegram I went to see Kálnoky and renewed my request, also in Your Excellency's name, that he would do all in his power to accelerate the course of judicial proceedings in the Ulmann case. I pointed out to His Excellency how important it was for the political interests of both countries that this permanent source of trouble be removed. Kálnoky promised to give immediate instructions at the Ministry of Justice with a view to achieving the desired purpose, and to communicate the result of his endeavours to me. I shall not omit to telegraph.

NIGRA.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 10/9/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Kálnoky has informed me that the inquiry concerning Ulmann is closed, and that the case has now been handed over to the magistracy and jury of Innsbruck. He believes the trial will be over before our Parliament meets, and has promised to make every effort to hasten its progress.

NIGRA.

(Strictly private.)

VIENNA, 2/10/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

In obedience to instructions contained in Your Excellency's telegram of yesterday, I have this day approached Count Kálnoky on the subject of the measures recently adopted against Italian

subjects at Triest. I did this with all due caution and in the manner which seemed to me best suited to the conditions. I reminded His Excellency of the promises he had made to His Majesty's ambassador, and then begged him to use his influence in bringing the Ulmann trial to a speedy close.

Count Kálnoky replied that he had not yet been informed of the particulars of the matter to which I had referred, but that he would obtain the necessary information from Count Taaffe. He added, however, that he had gathered from the newspaper reports that the measures in question had been adopted only against such Italians as had been proved to have taken part in the throwing of petards, and that such provisions were by no means severe. I pointed out to Count Kálnoky that in the interest of both countries any measure that could be used as a pretext for agitation should be carefully avoided; but His Excellency replied that these provisions which, moreover, contained no element of provocation, were but the simple precautions every State is bound to adopt in order to guarantee public safety. As for the Ulmann trial, Count Kálnoky repeated to me what he had already told His Majesty's ambassador, saying that he had done everything in his power to hasten its conclusion, and that he was still in correspondence with Count Taaffe on the subject. An allusion on my part to the necessity that the trial be concluded before the Italian Parliament assembles, elicited the reply that His Excellency had no doubt it would be over before that date, and that the present delay was due solely to the usual and indispensable judicial proceedings.

AVARNA.

(Private.)

BERLIN, 3/10/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

The Under-Secretary of State wrote to Prince Reuss yesterday instructing him to speak to Count Kálnoky in the spirit of Your Excellency's telegram of October 1, concerning the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian authorities at Triest. It is unnecessary to point out that if this intervention is to succeed, the most profound silence must be maintained as regards the instructions forwarded to its representative in Vienna by the Imperial Government.

LAUNAY.

VIENNA, 22/10/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

At the weekly reception which was held to-day, I again spoke to Count Kálnoky concerning the Ulmann trial, in compliance with the instructions imparted to me by Your Excellency's telegram of the twelfth. He informed me that the matter has recently had his attention, that he has spoken to the Minister of Justice urging him to hasten its conclusion, and that he still hoped to see it settled before the end of the month. He added that, should this be impossible, arrangements would be made for a special session to bring the trial to a close.

AVARNA.

VIENNA, 27/10/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Kálnoky sent for me to-day to discuss Your Excellency's telegram concerning the Ulmann trial, the contents of which I communicated to Szögyeny yesterday. He informed me that, notwithstanding the desire to comply with Your Excellency's wish it had not been possible to allow His Majesty's

Consul to assist at the trial in his official character, as such a concession, which had never been made to any foreign consul, was contrary to the Austrian law. Should this favour be granted to His Majesty's Consul, the government would be obliged to make similar concessions to the consuls of the other states, which would be impossible. I pointed out that foreign consuls in Italy enjoyed this privilege, and that a like concession towards His Majesty's Consuls in Austria would certainly strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries. The Minister replied that he had been unaware the Austro-Hungarian Consuls in Italy enjoyed a like privilege, and that certainly he had reason to believe they had never availed themselves of it. He added that, be this as it may, the Minister of Justice has already pronounced against this concession in the scheme of declarations (which he read to me, and which will presently be forwarded to His Majesty's Embassy), which scheme the Minister of Justice has prepared in reply to that drawn up by His Majesty's government concerning the interpretation of Article 16 of the Consular Convention of 1874. Kálnoky finally requested me to express to Your Excellency his regret that Austrian law makes it impossible for the Imperial government to comply with your request on this occasion.

AVARNA.

(Private.)

BERLIN, 7/11/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Before receipt of Your Excellency's telegram of the fifth of this present month, I had twice inquired at the German Chancery concerning the result of the instructions transmitted to Prince



Reuss, in compliance with the desire expressed in Your Excellency's telegram of October 1. I was informed that an inquiry is being carried on at Triest, which has, it appears, already revealed several circumstances prejudicial to Ulmann and other supposed political offenders in that city. I was furthermore informed that at the time of Emperor William's visit to Monza, or thereabouts, we ourselves had explained how undesirable it was that sentence should be pronounced before the opening of Parliament. It was presumed that the matter had been discussed during one of Your Excellency's interviews with Prince Bismarck. With all due caution I now hastened to speak to the Under-Secretary of State, laying especial stress upon the contents of the telegram which reached me last night. He will report to Friedrichsruhe, as the Prince Chancellor is not expected to return to Berlin before the middle of this month. Meanwhile the Under-Secretary of State did not hide from me how difficult it would be to again broach so delicate a subject to Kálnoky, a subject, moreover, which in reality lies outside his province. In as far as is possible, the German government always avoids protesting against certain branches of the administration, both in Austria-Hungary and in Russia, whose proceedings are not infrequently conducted with little regard for the interests of German subjects in the two Empires. LAUNAY.

VIENNA, 7/11/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

As Kálnoky is not to return to Vienna until to-morrow, I have this morning communicated to Szögyeny the contents of Your Excellency's tele-

gram concerning the Ulmann trial. I pointed out to him how much annoyance might result from the delay in concluding this trial, especially with regard to the meeting of the Italian Parliament which is soon to take place. He replied that he would repeat my communication to Kálnoky immediately on his return, and that he would speak to Taaffe this very day, and urge him to renew his efforts to bring the case to a close. The trial, he says, has not yet been begun, the promises made to the Imperial and Royal government notwithstanding. Szögyeny assured me that he fully appreciated how serious the annoyances to which I had alluded might be, and that he would, if for this reason only, make every effort to hasten the conclusion of the case, which he hoped would be brought to a close before the meeting of Parliament.

As soon as I am able to see Kálnoky I will bring further pressure to bear, as you have instructed me to do.

AVARNA.

VIENNA, 10/11/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Kálnoky granted me an audience to-day, and I seized this opportunity to press him to exert his influence that the Ulmann trial may be concluded before the opening of the Italian Parliament. He assured me that, immediately upon his return from Friedrichsruhe he had brought all his personal influence to bear upon the Minister of Justice, who had acquainted him with the difficulties which threaten to prevent the conclusion of this trial within the time specified, it having been necessary to translate all the voluminous acts of the case from Italian into German. This being the state of affairs,

Kálnoky begs me to inform Your Excellency that, in order to oblige you and remove what is but a source of annoyance to both governments, he has proposed that the Ulmann case be dropped, and that Ulmann himself be sent back to Italy. He has reason to hope the Emperor will consent to his proposal.

AVARNA.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 16/11/1889.

*His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

Kálnoky has this day informed me that, being most anxious to comply with Your Excellency's request, and also to fulfil the promises made to me that the case against Ulmann should be dropped and the man himself expelled from Austria, he, Kálnoky, has obtained His Majesty's consent, and already issued the necessary orders. I thanked the Minister, in your name, for this provision, it being a mark of moderation on the part of the Imperial government, and of deference towards that of His Majesty.

NIGRA.

‘Like a thunderbolt out of a cloudless sky’—so writes the Slavonic organ, the *Narodni List* of Zara, on July 19, 1890—‘the news has burst upon us that the government has dissolved the *Pro Patria* Society, which had its headquarters at Trent and branches in every region which the Italian nation has failed to redeem in Austria. . . . It is rumoured that at the last Congress which was held at Trent, the *inter pocula* discussions were of so violent a nature as to oblige the government to dissolve the Society. Alas, it was also by wine that Noah was compromised. . . . !’

The news reported with such open satisfaction by the organ of the Croats was true enough. The reasons for the dissolu-

tion were the following, which we have transcribed word for word :

‘ At its General Congress, held on June 29, 1890, at Trent, the non-political society, known as the *Pro Patria*, which, by means of local groups, extends its activity throughout Tyrol, all along the coast and throughout Dalmatia, voted unanimously and amidst loud applause, to accept a proposal made by one of its members, Dr. Carlo Dordi, to communicate by telegraph to the *Dante Alighieri* Society at Rome, through its president, Bonghi, the *Pro Patria*’s unconditional adhesion and most hearty congratulations.

‘ It being notorious that the *Dante Alighieri* Society of Rome maintains an attitude of hostility towards the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and frequent public communications through the medium of the Italian periodical press having furthermore made it a matter of general knowledge that the aims of that association are directed against the interests of the Austrian State, the *Pro Patria* Society, by the vote above mentioned, has revealed the fact that, besides its scholastic aims, which its social statutes place in the front line, it has other purposes, purposes which, under certain circumstances, might even clash with the regulations of the penal code. A further, indirect proof of the disloyal and anti-patriotic tendency of the *Pro Patria*, was the fact that the committee appointed to organise the festivities on the occasion of the General Congress at Trent (at the head of which committee was the president of the Trent branch, the lawyer, Dr. Carlo Dordi), refrained from decorating the city with flags as had been intended (the authorities even having been notified to this effect),



in consequence of a decree issued by the Imperial and Royal Commissary of Police, according to which the city could be decorated with flags only on condition that a banner displaying the Austrian colours be exhibited in a prominent position at the same time. . . .’

The dissolution of the *Pro Patria*, of an association, that is to say, whose purposes were not political but educational, had been determined upon some months before, in April in fact, when the idea of erecting a monument to Dante at Trent had been welcomed in Italy as a profession of Italian nationalism, and had been promoted by numerous subscriptions. In Austria the Emperor had sanctioned a public subscription for the purpose of defraying the expenses of this monument; but in Italy, when Provincial and Communal Councils sought to contribute to this subscription, coming out with explicit political declarations, it had been forbidden by Crispi. This measure, however, failed to satisfy the Austrian government, who saw fit to aim a blow at the Italian sentiment, as if that sentiment could be destroyed or even checked by a simple police regulation. Nor was the pretext judiciously chosen, for it was untrue that in the telegram on which the accusation was based, and which had never been delivered to the newly founded *Dante Alighieri* Society, the *Pro Patria* Congress had proclaimed its ‘satisfaction at the foundation of the new society.’ It was also untrue that the *Dante Alighieri* ‘maintained a hostile attitude towards the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,’ and that its aims were all ‘in direct opposition to the interests of the Austrian State.’ The second motive set forth in the decree was also worthless, for the imperial flag had not been excluded on the occasion of the congress at Trent, the local committee—which, moreover, had nothing to do with the presidential department of the *Pro Patria*—having elected to refrain from decorating the city with flags.

The *Dante Alighieri*, co-involved through the decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior, protested by means of the following letter, addressed to Crispi as President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—In its decree of dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society, the following is the main argument which the Austrian government adduces as proof of that Society's disloyal and antipatriotic conduct, as it calls it :

‘At its General Congress, held on June 29, 1890, at Trent, the non-political *Pro Patria* Society, which, by means of local groups, exerts its influence throughout Tyrol, along the sea-board and throughout Dalmatia, on the proposal of one of its members, Doctor Carlo Dordi, and amidst enthusiastic applause, unanimously resolved to telegraph its unqualified approval and most sincere congratulations to the *Dante Alighieri* Society at Rome, as well as to that society's president, Bonghi.

‘It being a well-known fact that the *Dante Alighieri* Society of Rome maintains a hostile attitude towards the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and repeated open declarations, which have been given widespread publicity by means of the Italian (periodical) press, having proved that the aims of that association are in direct opposition to the interests of the Austrian State, the *Pro Patria* Society has acknowledged, by the telegram above mentioned, that, besides the educational aims to which a leading place is assigned in its Social Statutes, it has other aims and purposes of a purely political nature, which, under certain circumstances, might clash with the provisions of the penal code.’

The Central Council of the *Dante Alighieri* Society can choose no better witness to the patent inaccuracy of such an accusation than the Italian Prime Minister himself.

The *Dante Alighieri* Society has never acted

clandestinely ; it has laboured and debated openly ; it has acquainted the government with its intentions, and from it has received encouragement and help.

This should be proof sufficient that none of the aims attributed to it by the Austrian decree are justified ; and it is not only our duty but the duty of our government as well to protest against assertions which assail our loyalty and its own.

In no country where Italians dwell has the *Dante Alighieri* sought to exert an influence other than that exerted everywhere by like associations, and it has worked with no other end in view than to maintain and stimulate certain bonds of an intellectual, moral, and historic nature.

In Austria herself, the Germans and Slavonians beyond her borders bring like influences to bear upon Germans and Slavonians within her borders. Why then should the Italians, who are not controlled by the Austrian government, alone be prevented from exerting like influences upon those who are ? Would it profit the Austrian government to let the world see that it considers the Italians its only enemies, and that, whereas for other peoples, the Austrian government is a Monarchy, it does not shrink from the appearance of tyranny where Italians are concerned ?

We will refrain from a discussion of that most deplorable act which resulted in the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society, an organisation whose aims (identical with our own) were eminently lofty, rational, and worthy of consideration and respect. We are well aware that we might not apply to our government were it our intention to request it to

acquaint the Austrian government with our opinion and its own. The liberty and autonomy of governments, be these prerogatives well used or ill, form a supreme rule of conduct for all.

We wish to declare, however, that this act of dissolving so meritorious a society, an act which seeks justification in that society's relations with our own, in hypothetical telegrams which were never received by us, in a part of the Italian press which does not represent us, and in like chimerical accusations, has, in reality, no justification or at least none which may be openly avowed.

In the firm conviction that you will give this protest of ours your personal attention and make use of it whenever you may deem it advisable, we tender you our most respectful homage.

We are Your Excellency's most devoted, the members of the Central Council of the *Dante Alighieri* Society present in Rome.

(Signed) RUGGERO BONGHI, Deputy to the Italian Parliament,  
*President.*

G. SOLIMBERGO, Deputy to the Italian Parliament,  
*Vice-President.*

GIULIO BIANCHI, Deputy to the Italian Parliament.

FERDINANDO MARTINI, Deputy to the Italian Parliament.

PIETRO PIETRI, *Solicitor.*

DR. GAETANO VITALI, *Secretary.*

The following documents reveal the character of the Hon. Crispi's diplomatic action on this occasion.

(Telegram.)

(Private and personal.)

ROME, 22 July, 1890.

Count Nigra, Italian Ambassador, Vienna.

I may not protest against the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society by Count Taaffe, this being a



measure of private discipline. What I must point out to Your Excellency is the fact that the Austrian Minister has made two serious mistakes in his decree: the first is the assertion that the president of the congress despatched a telegram to the *Dante Alighieri* Society, which he did not do; the second is the statement that the aims of this association are of a political and Irredentist nature.

The *Dante Alighieri* is a purely literary association, and the names of its president and members alone should suffice to prove that they are all men of temperate views, who would be incapable of any action calculated to involve the Italian government in international difficulties.

I cannot hide from you, however, that the Austrian decree has produced a painful impression on the minds even of the most moderate amongst us, who are asking themselves if this be the way to maintain that alliance between Italy and the neighbouring Empire which is of such importance to us.

It is generally believed here that Taaffe, who has the interests of the Catholic Party at heart, is hostile to the Triple Alliance, and that he would gladly see it cancelled.

Kindly keep this information to yourself, using it only with Count Kálnoky should you deem it expedient to do so.

CRISPI.

ROME, 24 July, 1890.

*To His Excellency Count Nigra, Vienna.*

SIGNOR AMBASCIATORE,—The Lieutenancy of Trent has dissolved the *Pro Patria* Society. His Majesty's government does not criticise an act of

home administration, which it is naturally beyond its province to do, every State being free to govern itself as it may deem best.

I am nevertheless bound to declare, in the interests of international relations, that the news of this act has produced a most painful impression throughout the Kingdom, especially as regards the motives which, it is alleged, provoked the decree of dissolution.

This decree, in fact, contains the statement that there were two reasons for the act of the Lieutenancy. The first is that the president of the congress, which was held at Trent on June 29, despatched a telegram to the Italian *Dante Alighieri* Society, expressing his full approbation and his most sincere congratulations on that society's achievements. The second reason is that the *Dante Alighieri* Society maintains a hostile attitude towards the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and that the aims of said society are in direct opposition to the Empire's interests.

Now, I wish to declare, *Signor Ambasciatore*, that these statements are without foundation. In the first place, the *Dante Alighieri*, which is presided over by the Hon. Ruggero Bonghi, received no telegram from the Trent Congress, and we must therefore conclude that the Imperial and Royal Lieutenancy has been misinformed. It is deplorable that two false reports should be alleged in justification of an act of such moment.

I now come to a point which should be thoroughly understood, and which is of importance to a national association such as the *Dante Alighieri*.

The *Dante Alighieri* Society has no political aims. Its members all belong to the moderate

party, and are not to be confounded—they themselves would be the first to resent this—with professed Irredentists. The purpose of the *Dante Alighieri* is to cultivate the Italian tongue wherever this language is spoken, and the society would not venture to lend itself to any act which might affect the government's international policy, or compromise its action in foreign countries. The relations that prevail between this association and the government are of such a nature and so well known that I must consider as an offence to ourselves any accusation brought against it of factious tendencies or of acts calculated to impair in any manner or measure the friendly relations which Italy maintains with the neighbouring Empire.

I trust that when Count Taaffe has taken note of what really happened, he will rectify the action of the Imperial and Royal Lieutenancy of Trent. It is not our intention to interfere with the administration of the Austrian government, but merely to point out that no one, not even a public functionary, may gratuitously offend a friendly government by groundless accusations. The Lieutenant's conduct is certainly not calculated to maintain that good understanding which it is our endeavour to preserve unimpaired, even at the cost of our own popularity.

When I was informed that a monument to Dante was to be erected at Trent, and that the Austrian government had not only permitted this act of homage to the great poet but had also sanctioned the founding of a society whose purpose was the cultivation of the Italian language, I was both gratified and encouraged, for in that very politic act I saw a tangible fact which would serve to guarantee to those of Italian nationality in this

polyglot Empire, the same rights that are guaranteed to the Germans, Slavonians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Roumanians, and all the other peoples of which the Empire is composed.

Now, however, it is with profound regret that I am forced to recognise that in this matter the Italian Ministry has been placed in a most awkward position. As long as the torch of Irredentism was kept alight by the Radicals, I did not fear it. But this last act, which revives the memory of other and numerous acts which have, from time to time, revealed the intolerance of the Austrian government, will suffice, I fear, to unsettle or at least to estrange those holding moderate and peaceful views, upon whose support the government has heretofore been able to count.

I am not sure that you will succeed in making all this clear to the Austro-Hungarian government, nor do I know whether Count Kálnoky possess sufficient authority to induce his colleague at the Home Office to adopt a wiser course. I can only assure Your Excellency that the alliance with Austria, which I alone am able to defend, would find the number of its enemies greatly increased, and I am not sure that, in 1892, I myself or my successor in office would be sufficiently strong to get it renewed.

I can understand how Count Taaffe, who is a fervent Catholic, might be induced by pressure brought to bear by the Vatican, to sanction acts which would oblige him to combat the alliance of the Central Powers. But above him is His Imperial and Royal Majesty the Emperor, who is distinguished for his great good sense and for his broad experience of government, and this August Sovereign cannot fail to perceive that the difficulties attendant upon



our endeavours, which endeavours are of importance to the Monarchy, must be enhanced beyond measure if his Minister fail to collaborate with us for the achievement of the purpose we all have in view.

The present letter is a sequel to my telegram of the evening of July 22. I enclose a copy of the protest forwarded to me by the *Dante Alighieri* Society on July 21, and I desire that you bear in mind the conditions set forth in my letter when discussing this delicate subject, which you will do in the manner and with such limitations as you may deem advisable. I wish, however, to impress upon you that it is my intention to avoid any cause of disagreement with the Imperial and Royal Government.

I beg you, *Signor Conte*, to accept the assurance of my high esteem.

CRISPI.

VIENNA, 27 July, 1890.

*To His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

SIGNOR PRESIDENTE,—I have pleasure in acknowledging receipt of the letter which Your Excellency did me the honour of despatching to me on the twenty-fourth of this month, which letter, referring to the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society, was a sequel to the telegram concerning the same matter which Your Excellency sent me on the twenty second, and which I received on the twenty-third. I also acknowledge receipt of the enclosed copy of a letter addressed to Your Excellency by the *Dante Alighieri* Society.

I had the honour to reply to your telegram by mine of the twenty-fifth of this month, which I have pleasure in confirming, and which I herewith transcribe :

‘(Private.)—I thank Your Excellency for the information imparted to me concerning the *Dante Alighieri* Society. You are aware that the Austro-Hungarian government will not tolerate any foreign interference in matters connected with Italians who are Austrian subjects. It will therefore be impossible for me to broach the subject of the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* to Kálnoky, especially now, after the appearance in the *Neue Freie Presse* of a telegram from Rome announcing that I have been ordered to take steps in the matter. I must take the liberty of referring to a certain passage in your letter, which reveals your belief that this dissolution was due to the Minister’s clerical leanings. Now, clericalism has nothing to do with this matter, for there were several priests among the members of the dissolved society, and, moreover, among those who applauded this dissolution most enthusiastically was the liberal German press of Austria. The fact is that the dissolution was due to certain injudicious acts on the part of said society, concerning which the Austro-Hungarian government cannot admit that we should be better informed than it is itself, this being a question of an association having its being in Austria.’

Your Excellency replied by the following telegram :

(Confidential.)

ROME, 26 July, 1890.

‘It was never my intention that you should protest against the *Pro Patria* decree, and the statements to that effect published by certain journals were pure inventions. In my letter of the twenty-fourth, which will soon reach you, I freely recognise that the rights of every government within its own

boundaries are unlimited, and that no one may interfere with its home administration. My purpose in telegraphing and writing to Your Excellency was to acquaint you with the impression produced in Italy by the decree dissolving the *Pro Patria*, and with the conduct and aims of the Italian *Dante Alighieri* Society, which has no designs upon the Italian provinces of Austria, but which extends its action to all countries where there are Italians. This organisation completes the work begun by the government with the institution of Italian schools in foreign countries.'

I repeat that I cannot make the dissolution of the *Pro Patria*, and the circumstances under which it took place, the subject of a discussion with Count Kálnoky, but I nevertheless propose, when I next meet Count Taaffe, to point out to him, without, however, going deeply into the matter, the mistake which has been made in the report accompanying the decree, concerning communications between the *Pro Patria* and the *Dante Alighieri* of Rome, and also concerning the aims of this latter society. But these errors have already been pointed out by a portion of the Press, and the best way to emphasise them will be by giving the greatest possible publicity to the letter which was addressed to Your Excellency by the Central Council of the *Dante Alighieri* Society of Rome.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Vatican, while it has doubtless derived satisfaction from the incident, as one calculated to impair the friendly relations prevailing between the two nations, has had no share in the measure adopted. I repeat that the question is not a clerical one, but essentially political and Irredentist. In your letter Your

Excellency touches upon a most serious question, that of the conservation of the alliance between Italy and Austro-Hungary, which, in your opinion, is rendered more difficult by the unfavourable impression produced in Italy by the measure in question, and, we may add, by the no less unfavourable one which certain injudicious acts of the *Pro Patria* Society have produced in Austria. It is certainly not Your Excellency's intention, nor is it my own, to treat a similar matter lightly. I will confine myself to reminding you of what is already well known to you, that Italy was persuaded to form this alliance—of which neither you nor I was the author—by certain imperative circumstances, which circumstances may or may not have become modified by time. I would further add that the alliance was sought, not by Austria-Hungary, but by Italy herself, and that it has been loyally maintained by both parties, to the mutual advantage of both, I must presume. In 1892 it will be for the wisdom of the governments that may then be presiding over the political administration of the two States, to decide whether it shall be renewed.

Accept, *Signor Presidente*, the assurance of my high esteem.

NIGRA.

(Private.)

ROME, 31 July, 1890.

*To His Excellency Count Nigra, Vienna.*

SIGNOR CONTE,—I am in receipt of yours of the twenty-seventh.

I have nothing to add to my letter of the twenty-fourth and to my telegrams of the twenty-second and twenty-sixth. I have noted the contents of yours of the twenty-seventh, and I feel that any



further discussion of the decree dissolving the *Pro Patria* Society would be superfluous for the present.

Allow me, however, to say a few words upon a subject which has incidentally found a place in our correspondence, and which is of the greatest importance.

I will not go back to the origin of the alliance, and I admit that it was Italy who took the initiative in the matter. But I can weigh the situation as it really is, and it cannot but be to the advantage of both parties to discuss it impartially and in a truly disinterested spirit.

I am convinced that the alliance is useful to both Italy and Austria. Italy must safeguard her frontiers. As she may not, for the present, have France for her friend, and this is indeed unfortunate, she must at all costs hold fast to Austria, and avoid compromising this friendship.

Should Austria escape us she would immediately ally herself with France for the defence of the Pope. And the consequences would be incalculable.

On the other hand, Austria needs Italy, who, under certain circumstances, might be able to render her signal service. Austria, sure of her position towards the Alps and in the Adriatic, would be free to act in the East, where her true interests lie, and where she is liable at any moment to be assailed by those who are her real enemies.

Austria is what she is, and should she seek to alter her state she would run the risk of destruction. Her very being, however, depends upon her respecting all the nationalities contained within the Empire's boundaries.

As for Italy, I am free to admit that she has an interest in the maintenance of Austria's integrity. For us that country is a mighty barricade against possible and more dangerous adversaries who must not be allowed to approach our frontiers.

Under these conditions no sources of disagreement should be allowed to exist between Italy and Austria, and sooner or later the boundary question must be settled amicably.

It should be borne in mind, however, that if the Austrian alliance is unpopular in Italy, this is because the memory of the national struggle and of imperial misgovernment is still fresh amongst us.

It is therefore essential that Austria should make us forget her past, and that she so shape her policy as to avoid wounding the spirit of nationalism which is still so keenly alive in the Italians.

These observations, *Signor Conte*, must prove to you that my views are certainly conciliatory, and that whatever request I may make of the Austrian government will always be in the interests of both countries.—Yours sincerely,

F. CRISPI.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 7 August, 1890.

*To His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

SIGNOR PRESIDENTE,—I have received your autograph letter of July 31, for which accept my thanks. Your language is that of a statesman, and your letter is pure gold from beginning to end. You believe that the alliance is useful both to Italy and Austria. I can assure you that such is also the opinion of Kálmoky and of all the other Austrian Ministers. These Ministers are well aware of the

unfavourable impression produced in Italy by the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* Society, but of two evils they have chosen what they believe to be the lesser for them. That is to say, they prefer that an unfavourable impression should be produced in Italy rather than in Austria. They desire our alliance and are prepared to fulfil faithfully the obligations it entails, but only on condition that they be not forced to tolerate Irredentism at home. Such is the situation, and it is one no ambassador nor minister can alter.

It is certainly to be desired that Austria's Italian subjects be placed in a position equal, in reality, to that enjoyed by the other nationalities of which the Empire is composed. But if this is to be obtained, the Italian subjects of Austria should, on their part, place themselves in the same conditions as the other nationalities, and this they are not willing to do. To speak plainly, they must renounce Irredentism.

Instead of this, however, they allow no opportunity for flaunting it to escape them, and the *Pro Patria* Society actually allowed its zeal to lead it to a demonstration against the Austrian flag. I do not presume to judge this party; I am simply stating facts; and I wish once more to declare that every attempt on the part of the Italian government to interfere in these matters harms rather than helps the cause of Austria's Italian subjects. On the other hand, every act of these subjects that points towards Italy enhances the difficulty of the Italian government's position towards Austria-Hungary.

And here I might bring my letter to a close, you being, in fact, perfectly familiar with the question, and well aware that we may not insist.

But I cannot refrain from reverting to certain

other observations which have been touched upon in the course of a previous correspondence. You appear convinced that the measures adopted against the *Pro Patria* Society were due, in part, to Count Taaffe's clerical tendencies. Now I must correct this erroneous opinion of yours. In the first place, in this country every one is more or less clerical. But in the present instance clericalism has nothing to do with the matter. If, instead of Count Taaffe, the most liberal Jew of Vienna were Minister of the Interior, this would not alter the situation in the least. You are aware with what enthusiasm the liberal press of Vienna welcomed this dissolution. Therefore it cannot be a question of clericalism, but rather one of Irredentism and politics. I beseech you not to be led into seeing Jesuits even where they are not!

I am also anxious to speak clearly on another point. I do not wish you to conclude that I shrink from making disagreeable communications to Kálnoky or to the other Imperial Ministers. Kindly allow yourself to be persuaded that I have nothing, absolutely nothing, to expect, to ask, or to fear from these gentlemen, and that I am not at all anxious to remain here. My position is such that I may express my opinions with the utmost freedom not only to them, but to you yourself or to any one else, even when those opinions are unpalatable. But I dislike 'beating the waves' and taking steps that are not only useless but even harmful, such unprofitable steps as are calculated to chill the relations between the two States.

One word more concerning the Austrian alliance, which, you tell me, is unpopular in Italy. I feel sure that you are prepared to render all justice to



Kálnoky, and to admit that in every emergency with which we have heretofore been confronted, Austria-Hungary has been ready with her support, and that this support has not infrequently been more spontaneous, more generous, than that of Germany herself.

I regret that this alliance should be unpopular amongst our people, and that its necessity should not be understood. My predilection for France is of long standing, and I have never concealed it. Certainly, therefore, had I seen the possibility of an alliance between that country and Italy I should not be here to-day. But even when the management of relations between France and Italy was in the hands of such men as Cairoli and Cialdini, who were notoriously partial to France, not only did an understanding between the two countries remain impossible, but we were even obliged to submit to the Tunis outrage.

If, all this notwithstanding, the Austro-Italian alliance is unpopular with us, this is but a proof that our unfortunate country has not yet suffered enough, and that it stands in need of further, more disastrous and humiliating lessons. Let her but withdraw from this alliance, and she will receive these lessons. In the present state of Europe, Italy must choose one of three alternatives: to cling to the present alliance with all its drawbacks but with the safety it brings; to go down upon her knees to France; or to become a greater Belgium without that country's industries. Nor is it even certain, after all, that this greater Belgium, thanks to amputations and divisions, might not be reduced to far smaller dimensions.—Believe me, *Signor Presidente*,  
your most devoted  
NIGRA.

TRIEST, 1 August, 1890.

*His Italian Majesty's Consul-General  
at Triest, to Crispi at Rome.*

SIGNOR MINISTRO,—Instead of reporting and, of necessity, repeating the information which the press has already published and spread abroad, I deem it more important to sum up and consider those events which are of greatest moment and interest to His Majesty's government.

The Ministerial Decree which pronounced the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* has been everywhere applied and enforced with extreme rigour.

Having closed all the schools and kindergartens which were dependent upon the society, the government, by means of a long series of provisions which were generally considered ill-advised, took possession of their funds and archives, prohibited all collections, public assemblies or demonstrations, and confiscated almost all of the Italian newspapers.

These stern measures, however, merely increased the national ill-humour and enhanced the difficulties of a situation which was already critical enough, and also not devoid of danger. These measures simply angered the Italians without discouraging them; they were also obnoxious to the Germans, who are alarmed at the influential position the government is allowing the Slavonians to usurp; nor were the Croats and Slavonians themselves satisfied, who considered the measures adopted too mild and consequently inadequate. The attitude of these latter is indeed alarming, as is also the language of the Slavonic press, which has already begun to proclaim its triumph and the downfall of our nationality.

On the other hand, the calm and dignified attitude

of the Italians, both of those who are Austrian subjects and of our own people, is reassuring.

In fact, the subjects of His Italian Majesty are to-day giving proof that not only do they appreciate the demands of international politics, but that they are fully aware of the necessity of refraining from interference, and this in the interest of those of their fellow-countrymen who are Austrian subjects. The Italians of Austria have resisted the pressure brought to bear by the party that would have incited them to commit excesses, and not by means of demonstrations and noisy protests, but deliberately and by availing themselves of legal and constitutional means have they again sought to obtain recognition of those rights which are theirs by virtue of the constitution itself.

Here in Triest, meanwhile, we are daily awaiting the decision of the Empire's Supreme Tribunal, in the hope that it may be such as to permit the association which has been suppressed to arise again upon a different basis.

In Istria, where the Italian schools are most numerous, the agitation is strongest, and the fiery language used by the *Podestà* of Rovigo at the recent Congress of the Political Club of Istria, (Your Excellency will find the text enclosed herewith) ably illustrates its gravity and significance.

In Dalmatia, as the enclosed report sets forth, the Slavonians consider the struggle as practically at an end, and have actually begun to dictate terms and stipulate conditions.

MALMUSI.

Count Taaffe's Ministerial Decree gave rise to much dissatisfaction in Italy, and of this the Radicals were quick to take advantage. Irredentist agitation flamed forth, and all of the Hon. Crispi's energy and authority were required to quench it.

Here is an example of the instructions he imparted to the prefects on this occasion.

(Private.)

26/7.

*Commendatore Basile, Prefect at Milan.*

I herewith repeat to you what I have already telegraphed to your colleague at Bari.

The decree dissolving the *Pro Patria* is the act of a foreign government dealing with home affairs, with which we have no right to interfere.

We must respect the independence of other states if we wish our own independence to be respected.

The popular demonstration which threatens in your city would amount to a crime against Article 113 of the Penal Code, which punishes any act calculated to disturb the friendly relations prevailing between the Italian government and that of a foreign state, with a period of imprisonment of from three to thirty months.

You must seek to persuade the fomenters of this demonstration to keep quiet. Should admonition prove of no avail, you must enforce the laws.

CRISPI.

(Private.)

31 July, 1890.

*To Commendatore Basile, Prefect in Milan.*

Mass meetings and demonstrations against the decree dissolving the *Pro Patria* would be anti-patriotic acts which would but justify the Austrian government in the measures it has adopted.

The members of the *Pro Patria* declare that theirs was an association whose sole purpose was national culture and the diffusion of our language in those provinces where Italian is spoken.

Demonstrations and mass meetings would suggest



that the *Pro Patria* was, in reality, an Irredentist society, as the Lieutenancy of Trent declared it to be. The members would only suffer the more in consequence of these demonstrations, for it would be made impossible for them to reorganise their society under another name.

See Missori, Antongini, and other patriots, and try to persuade them to use their authority with those who, taking patriotism as a pretext, would upset order in Italy and endamage the cause of the very people for whose redemption they pretend to labour.

I invoke the aid of all who are sensible of and who seek to perform their duty towards their country.

CRISPI.

During the latter part of August, Crispi was obliged to adopt a measure which may be termed a demonstration of his firm determination to check the Irredentist movement. He dissolved (decree of August 22) all those associations, committees, clubs, and centres (different denominations, these, for organisations which had but one purpose) which bore the names of Guglielmo Oberdank and Pietro Barsanti.

There was no abuse which the Radicals did not heap upon Crispi for his 'Austrian sycophancy,' but as a matter of fact he had but performed a painful duty, and the telegrams that passed at this time between Crispi and King Humbert, who fully appreciated his Prime Minister's patriotism, reveal the true state of that statesman's feelings.

25 August, 1890.

*To His Majesty the King, at Montechiari.*

To-day, in all the cities where such existed, those associations which bore the names of Barsanti and Oberdank have been simultaneously dissolved.

The police officials were equal to their duty, and consequently the operations were successful.

In Rome bombs were found.

The acts have been handed over to the judicial authorities.—Your Majesty's most devoted servant,  
F. CRISPI.

MONTECHIARI, 28 August, 1890.

*To His Excellency Cavaliere Crispi, Prime Minister.*

I am in receipt of your telegram of the night before last.

The measure adopted of dissolving the Oberdank and Barsanti Clubs is admirable, as it will put an end to ambiguous and shameful tolerance on the part of a fully developed State. Your straightforward and energetic action will convince the factious leaders that they have a government to deal with which is determined to be respected, and they will respect it. On the other hand, I trust that a certain allied government will not render your patriotic undertaking more difficult by adopting useless and over severe measures.

In any case, you have my most sincere gratitude for what you have accomplished.

Here everything is progressing favourably. I am much gratified by the spirit that prevails amongst the troops and by the reception I everywhere receive from the inhabitants.—Your affectionate

HUMBERT.

28 August, 1890.

*To His Majesty the King, at Montechiari.*

Austria must go her own way. I may regret her course, but I must not allow myself to be disturbed by it.

If we do our duty and govern Italy with a firm hand, we shall one day be justified in declaring that,

if the end has been hastened for the neighbouring Empire, it was through no fault of ours.

Always at Your Majesty's commands,—I am,  
Your Majesty's most devoted servant,

F. CRISPI.

In September Crispi was greatly annoyed by an incident of which a colleague of his in the Ministry was rather the victim than the author, and which necessitated a measure that was most painful to the Prime Minister.

At a banquet given at Udine in honour of the Hon. Seismit-Doda, Minister of Finance, one of the guests, *Avvocato* Feder, in proposing the Minister's health, recalled the fact that, in 1848, 'on learning of the revolution at Vienna that had caused His Roman Catholic and Apostolic Majesty to take to flight,' Doda had hastened from Triest to Venice, to 'participate in that glorious Assembly that had voted resistance at any cost,' and he proceeded to express the hope that His Excellency might 'close his laborious career . . . by repeating the journey in the opposite direction, and this time on board an Italian ship with the Italian colours floating on the breeze!'

The Hon. Seismit-Doda heard, and held his peace, but the press seized upon the episode and placed it in its true light, that of an Irredentist demonstration in the presence and, presumably, with the approval of one of His Majesty's Ministers.

Crispi immediately telegraphed to Doda expressing his astonishment at his conduct, and censuring him because he and the Prefect had not quitted the banqueting hall without delay.

'By your attitude of indifference,' he added, 'you implied your sympathy both with the speaker and the applause. As head of the Government, I cannot permit any doubt to arise concerning the loyalty with which the international conditions are maintained, nor any suspicion that one even of my colleagues is opposed to my policy.'

The Hon. Seismit-Doda could no longer remain in office; but instead of quietly accepting the situation, he became angry, made communications to the Opposition press, and refused a friendly invitation to tender his resignation. Crispi

was therefore obliged to propose to the King a decree relieving the Minister of office.

The question was dragged before the Chamber and discussed on December 19. Crispi demanded a vote, and the Chamber, upon a motion proposed by the Hon. Angelo Muratori, proclaimed its approval of Crispi's conduct by 271 votes in his favour to 10 against him, while 16 members abstained from voting.

The sentence of the Imperial Supreme Court concerning the dissolution of the *Pro Patria* was pronounced on October 28. It delivered a blow at both parties, for while confirming the government decree, it nevertheless granted permission for the society dissolved to re-form under the name of the *National League*. In conclusion, the decree of July 16 was made to appear in the light of an admonition to the Italian Society to refrain from meddling in politics.

The last phase of Crispi's diplomatic action in this matter is explained by the following telegram :—

(Private.)

ROME, 26 October, 1890.

*To the Italian Embassy at Vienna.*

The words spoken in reference to the *Dante Alighieri* Society by the Imperial and Royal Advocate before the Supreme Court of the Empire, and the opinion expressed concerning Signor Bonghi, would have been of but slight importance had they been pronounced by one who was not in duty bound to be familiar with Italian conditions. Spoken at Vienna, however, they have produced so strange an impression here that we feel obliged to request that at least they be not recorded in the sentence which the court will pronounce against the *Pro Patria* on the 28th of this month. This earnest wish of ours should certainly be complied with, for should the false conception of the matter be repeated in an official act, it would arouse much ill-feeling in Italy,



especially at the present moment. Count Kálnoky himself, moreover, in course of conversation with Count Nigra, has acknowledged the error which has been committed in dragging the *Dante Alighieri* into the *Pro Patria* question. In an interview which you will immediately seek with Szögyeny concerning what is going on, you will endeavour to convince him that the *Fremdenblatt* must be made to suspend its communications concerning the Vatican's correspondence with the Nuncio Galimberti, for should these continue, we should be obliged to publish the pontifical documents in full, which act would be prejudicial to all, save ourselves.

CRISPI.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 26 October, 1890.

*To His Excellency Crispi.*

I have communicated to Szögyeny the contents of Your Excellency's telegram of yesterday evening concerning the *Fremdenblatt*. Szögyeny assured me that the Note in question was published in compliance with various requests which had been sent in to the Ministry, and that its one purpose was to prove that no news has been received here of the correspondence which has passed between the Vatican and the Nuncio Galimberti. Szögyeny added that it would greatly distress him if the Austro-Hungarian government were suspected of unfriendly intentions towards Italy, as that government had no desire to interfere in such matters. Szögyeny begged me to assure Your Excellency that, in the future, he will do his best to prevent official announcements of a similar nature.

AVARNA.

(Confidential.)

VIENNA, 27 October, 1890.

*To His Excellency Crispi.*

Szögyeny left early this morning on a hunting expedition, and will not return until late this evening. I shall therefore be unable to communicate with him, as you request, until to-morrow.

I take this opportunity of submitting a few observations for your consideration.

The principal accusation brought against the *Pro Patria* is its . . . (?) with the *Dante Alighieri*. This accusation was disproved by the *Avvocato* Lovisoni, whose successful defence of the *Dante Alighieri* and of the Hon. Bonghi, proved them to have been perfectly loyal in their intentions. This fact notwithstanding, the government's representative maintains the charge in words which it is your desire may not be recorded in the sentence.

The steps which you have requested me to take, should they be favourably received, would place this government in a false position, and justify the demand advanced by the *Pro Patria* to be reinstated, which request the Austro-Hungarian government appears unwilling to comply with.

Nevertheless, should Your Excellency deem it advisable for me to make the communication in question to Szögyeny, I shall carry out your instructions as swiftly and conscientiously as possible. In this case I must beg you to telegraph me further orders without delay.

AVARNA.

(Urgent.)

ROME, 27 October, 1890.

*The Italian Embassy at Vienna.*

The simple fact that we have allowed the *Dante Alighieri* to subsist should suffice to convince the Austrian government that this society has no

political aims, but that it is of a purely literary character. Otherwise it would have been dissolved as we have dissolved other associations. Therefore oblige me by carrying out my instructions, and also by acquainting Szögyeny with the observations above set forth.

CRISPI.

VIENNA, 28 October, 1890.

*To His Excellency Crispi, at Rome.*

I have acquainted Szögyeny with the contents of Your Excellency's two telegrams concerning the *Dante Alighieri*, and have explained the several considerations therein contained. Szögyeny told me that Kálnoky had not neglected to inform Taafe of his interview with His Majesty's Ambassador concerning the false impressions of the *Dante Alighieri* and of Signor Bonghi that prevail here. Szögyeny added that, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has no direct influence with the President of the Supreme Court, he himself would go to Count Taafe this very day, acquaint him with the contents of Your Excellency's telegrams which I have reported to him, and state your request. Szögyeny assured me that it was his belief the sentence would contain nothing calculated to offend His Majesty's government or Your Excellency.

AVARNA.

The general elections which took place in December 1890, coming, as they did, after a long period of agitation fomented by the Radical party, proved, nevertheless, a signal defeat for that party. Among the numerous congratulations which Crispi received from all quarters, those of Austria were not wanting. In his despatch of January 11, 1891, which is interesting also because it touches upon another thorny question, Count Nigra voices the congratulations of Francis Joseph.

‘ I dined at Court yesterday, and on this occasion His Majesty expressed to me his congratulations on the result of the recent elections in Italy, and warmly praised the firmness and ability with which Italy’s home and foreign policy are conducted. I repeat his very words, because, in general, the Emperor is most sparing of his praises. He added that the Triple Alliance certainly entails sacrifice, but that it has succeeded in its purpose of preserving the peace of Europe. The conversation then turned upon the economic question, and I explained to His Majesty the true reason for the prorogation of the faculty of denouncing the present treaty, which is, to enable both governments to examine the new situation as it will appear at the close of the negotiations now in progress between Austria-Hungary and Germany, which examination may possibly lead to modifications that will be to the advantage of both parties.

‘ The Emperor then inquired most cordially for the King and Queen, and the Empress expressed her regret that when she was last in Italy she had been unable to visit the Queen, of whom she spoke in the most flattering terms; and she furthermore inquired whether it would be possible to visit Her Majesty elsewhere than in Rome.

‘ I replied that I believed the Queen herself would be most happy to meet the Empress anywhere, but that there was something even stronger than the wills of Sovereigns, and that was the public opinion of their country, which, in this case, would disapprove of a visit elsewhere than in Rome.’

When on January 31, 1891, after the Chamber’s truly vindictive vote, Crispi was permitted to retire by him who should have felt himself bound, both by duty and interest, to



maintain him in office, the Austro-Hungarian Chancellor telegraphed as follows to his Ambassador at Rome, Baron von Bruck :—

5 February, 1891.

I beg Your Excellency to seek an early opportunity of expressing to Signor Crispi my most sincere regrets on his decision to retire, and to assure him that during his term of office the loyalty and firmness he has displayed in directing his policy have not only established his reputation as a statesman of superior powers, but have also been of inestimable advantage in maintaining the peace of Europe and friendly relations between Italy and ourselves.

I doubt whether Italy possess another statesman capable of directing both home and foreign affairs with equal skill, and this leads me to conclude that he will not withdraw from the scene of political action upon which he now plays the leading part.

KÁLNOKY.<sup>1</sup>

The *Fremdenblatt*, the official organ of the Chancery Department, devoted an editorial to the event (4 February), from which we will quote the opening sentences only :—

‘In Francesco Crispi a great Minister has fallen. Crispi is one of the most eminent among those who play a part on the stage of European politics to-day. His is a surprising, characteristic and superior personality. He brought the Sicilian temperament with him into public life, a temperament that is at once ardent and vigorous, cautious and calculating, and which, in him, is coupled with the highest talents and an indomitable energy. Not until recent years has this man, whose sphere of action had heretofore lain within the narrow circle of Italian home affairs, been revealed to the world as a remarkable and important personage.’

In December 1893, Crispi resumed the reins of government under grave conditions with which every one is acquainted,

<sup>1</sup> From the French.

and Baron von Bruck, who was still Ambassador at Rome, was among the first to present his own and Chancellor Kálmoky's greetings and best wishes for the success of the 'mighty task he had undertaken.' Count Nigra, who was still at Vienna, telegraphed him his 'sincere congratulations on his return to office,' adding :

'Your Excellency will have seen that your re-appearance in the Cabinet is welcomed by public opinion in this country with a confidence which is shared by the Imperial Government itself.'

Crispi's endeavours to re-establish public order, which had been disturbed, especially in Sicily and the Lunigiana, were followed by Austria with sympathetic attention; and when, in June 1894, the energetic Minister was made the object of a second murderous attack, by Paolo Lega, who fired upon him at close range, but fortunately missed his aim, Count Nigra, writing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared that the episode had aroused the 'greatest indignation against the would-be assassin and the warmest sympathy for the illustrious Italian patriot.'

But in October of the same year the Imperial Government gave Crispi serious ground for complaint by a decree obliging the Italians of Istria to use the Croatian language as well as the Italian on all signs and posters. This decree produced a great sensation in all parts of Austria where Italian is spoken, which dissatisfaction soon spread to Italy. The difficulties against which Crispi was already battling so valiantly were so complex that this latest act of petty persecution on the part of Austria tried him sorely. In a private letter to Count Nigra he wrote :—

'Our efforts to re-establish order throughout the country are beset with difficulties, but nevertheless we are making headway. . . . This movement in Istria, meanwhile, is most inopportune. It supplies the government's adversaries with a pretext for agitation. . . . Austria might indeed have shown

greater prudence. Being a polyglot Empire she should see that her strength depends upon respecting all those nationalities of which the State is composed. It strikes me also, that the Austrian government is unwise in trusting the Slavonians, who have their eyes fixed on St. Petersburg. We might further observe that the task of uprooting the Italian language on the opposite shores of the Adriatic is a difficult one, and that it will become quite impossible if violence be used. It would be easier to make the Slavonians Italians than the Italians Slavonians.

‘Some justification might have been found for such a policy before 1848. To-day it is uncalled for, because the Italian government loyally maintains its friendly relations with the neighbouring Empire.

‘I may not venture to make proposals, but if you could put in a good word with Kálnoky you would be performing a beneficent action. Let them grant the Italians the same rights which other peoples enjoy, and not only will peace be preserved at home, but the noise of these disturbances will no longer re-echo throughout our peninsula.’

As in the past, after having addressed his remonstrances directly to the Austrian government, remonstrances upon whose success he could hardly have counted owing to the tenacious spirit of suspicion by which that administration was pervaded, Crispi sought the intervention at Vienna of that other Power which was interested in the preservation of friendly relations between Austria and Italy, and appealed to Emperor William himself.

ROME, 5 November, 1894.

*To Count Lanza, Italian Ambassador at Berlin.*

The conduct of the Austrian government in Istria is entirely devoid of good sense. The Empire

being polyglot, it is of vital importance that all nationalities, and especially the Italian and German, which are the only really civilised ones, should be respected.

The preference given to the Slavonians is derogatory to the government as well as to all others concerned. I cannot hide the fact that this agitation places the Italian government in a difficult position, and enhances the antipathy our people feel towards our alliance with Austria, which is most unpopular here.

I am prepared to fulfil my duty in all ways, but let them not place me in such a position as to necessitate my resignation.

See the Emperor at once, and entreat him to interfere, that this question of tongues may be finally settled, and the Italian be treated with the same respect as the Slavonic. CRISPI.

Failing, probably, to understand Crispi's state of mind, the Ambassador decided that the mission entrusted to him could not be carried out with the rapidity the Minister desired. At any rate his reply was such as to lead Crispi to suspect him of indifference.

‘I cannot, of course, see the Emperor at any moment, but must either await a favourable opportunity or ask for an audience, which is an unusual and too lengthy proceeding, as His Majesty is continually on the move.

‘At any rate, if not directly, then by means of the Chancery Department, I will see that His Majesty is informed this very day of the position in which Italy is placed by the Austro-Hungarian policy in Istria.

‘I have no doubt His Imperial Majesty will advise Vienna to the best of his ability.’



Crispi replied as follows :—

‘After a residence of seven-and-twenty months at Berlin, I am amazed that you, a general in our army and our ambassador, should not yet have obtained the privilege of seeing the Emperor whenever the exigencies of our international policy make an interview desirable.

‘I cannot hide from you that your telegram is most unsatisfactory.’

Upon receipt of this sharp reprimand the Ambassador immediately telegraphed his resignation. Crispi declined to accept it, but replied instead : ‘Do your duty first, and I will then decide what measures to adopt.’ While this caustic correspondence was being carried on, the Emperor, who had been informed of the state of things, ordered Count Eulenburg, German Ambassador at Vienna, who was then in Berlin, to return to his residence without delay, and advise the administration in the way Crispi desired, that the foundations of the alliance might not be shaken.

On November 7, von Bülow, German Ambassador at Rome, called upon Crispi to assure him that the Emperor had complied with his wishes. He moreover begged the Minister, in the name of the German Sovereign, not to accept Lanza’s resignation. General Lanza was highly esteemed at Berlin, and the Emperor greatly appreciated his tact and the perfect distinction of his bearing. The following despatches show how the incident was finally resolved.

*To His Excellency Lanza, at Berlin.*

This evening Herr von Bülow called upon me and begged me not to accept your resignation. He assured me that, by leaving you at Berlin I should be conferring a favour upon the Emperor. I replied that I had never intended doing anything to displease Germany’s August Sovereign, and I herewith assure you that this incident is all the more welcome,

in so much as it proves to me that you are in a position to serve our country well with His Royal and Imperial Majesty.

CRISPI.

BERLIN, 8 November, 1894.

*To His Excellency Crispi, at Rome.*

I thank Your Excellency for your telegram of last night, after which I gladly leave the decision to you. A private letter follows.

LANZA.

ROME, 8 November, 1894.

*To General Lanza, Italian Ambassador at Berlin.*

Only one thing is now of importance, that you should report to me the result of the mission with which I entrusted you by my telegram of the fifth.

CRISPI.

(Private.)

BERLIN, 11 November, 1894.

*To His Excellency Crispi, at Rome.*

The Emperor having been informed of my desire to see him, His Majesty invited me to join him at Potsdam where he happened to be, such an invitation being unusual, as to-day is a holiday. I spent several hours in the family circle. I repeated to His Majesty what the Chancellor had already told him, and the Emperor replied more or less as follows:—

‘Tell Crispi I admire the zeal he is displaying in the service of his King and Country by his defence of the international agreements. I heartily deplore the difficulties which are created for him by the conduct of the Austro-Hungarian government in Istria, difficulties similar to those it creates for me in the Polish provinces. I have requested that you

be informed of the orders I personally imparted to my Ambassador at Vienna. I will bring further pressure to bear in the matter, and my one regret is that I may not appeal directly to the Austrian Emperor himself; but, as I would certainly not suffer the slightest interference on his part with home affairs of my own, so I may not meddle with what concerns his home policy. I will, however, continue my efforts to convince the Austro-Hungarian government that its conduct towards its Italian subjects seriously imperils the stability of the alliance.'

LANZA.

ROME, 12 November, 1894.

*To Count Lanza, Italian Ambassador at Berlin.*

I thank you for last night's telegram, which proves that I was justified in urging you to see the Emperor. You, a soldier and a patriot, will understand the difficulties of my position, and I trust we may always continue to agree.

Express my gratitude to the Emperor, and when you see or write to him, explain to His Imperial and Royal Majesty that peace in the Italian provinces of the Empire is indispensable if the alliance is to be maintained.

CRISPI.

It cannot be doubted that by means of his stern and loyal home policy Crispi obtained from Austria every concession it was possible to obtain, and he actually succeeded in forcing the Imperial Chancery to modify the prejudices and inveterate police systems of the Austrian government.

When, having reached the close of his career, Count Kálnoky relinquished the lofty position he had held during Crispi's two terms of office, he expressed the following opinion of him to Count Nigra:—

VIENNA, 18 May, 1895.

*To His Excellency Crispi, at Rome.*

DEAR SIGNOR PRESIDENTE,—On taking leave of me to-day, Count Kálnoky expressly charged me to inform you that he cherishes the pleasantest memories of his official and private dealings with you. He praised most feelingly the loyal attitude which your administration has ever maintained towards Austria-Hungary, and the valuable support your authoritative and powerful action has afforded the cause of the Triple Alliance, as well as that other cause so closely connected with it, of the peace of Europe.

‘The Emperor,’ he said, ‘shares my views on this point, and I can assure you that my successor, in carrying out his Sovereign’s wishes, will maintain the traditional policy of sincerely friendly relations with Italy and of mutual confidence, which policy is one of my most important legacies to my successor.’

It is in compliance with his own desire that I have here acquainted you with Count Kálnoky’s precise words, and I have but to add that they should be appreciated the more highly, in consideration of the fact that he who pronounced them is reserved by nature, and seldom yields to impulses of this sort.

Believe me to be what I most truly am,—Your devoted friend,

NIGRA.



# ITALY AND FRANCE

## CHAPTER V

### FRANCO-ITALIAN RELATIONS BETWEEN 1890 AND 1896

The political stage and statesmen in France—The Ambassadors De Moüy and Mariani, and Minister Spuller -- How Monsieur Billot was received—His *conciliatory action*—The launching of the *Sardegna* and the visit of the French fleet to Spezia, which did not take place—French illusions concerning the Hon. di Rudini—The Triple Alliance renewed—Crispi's second Ministry—A sequel to the Aigues-Mortes episode—The conciliatory policy—Maurice Rouvier and a secret mission—Ambassador Ressman's correspondence—Ressman's recall, and its true causes.

UNTIL the year 1890 the Franco-Italian relations had been strained. France had displayed her hostility to our alliance with Germany in every way and upon every field, occasioning incidents which had but strengthened Italy's position in Europe, and tightened the bonds that united her with the two Central Empires by means of the treaty which had been renewed on May 20, 1887.

The fact must be recognised, however, that throughout this determined struggle against Italian interests, those in office had not infrequently been forced to go to extremes by the very atmosphere of the political arena, that was maintained in a state of agitation by a press which knew no moderation.

At the close of his mission at Rome the Ambassador, Count de Moüy, said in a private letter to Crispi, written in Paris on April 6, 1889 :—

‘ While at Rome I became convinced that I possessed your esteem and regard : in the course of those matters which were entrusted to me for

settlement you were ever quick to understand *how often my task was an unwelcome one, and how honestly I sought to execute it in a friendly and conciliatory manner*. . . . I shall never forget our last interviews, which affected me so strongly; my recall from Rome has been the great grief of my diplomatic career.'

De Moüy had been the representative of that irritating policy which was personified in 1888 in Minister Goblet, of whom de Moüy himself said in one of his books,<sup>1</sup> 'that with his unyielding and irascible temper he was but ill equipped to deal with matters of diplomacy, which he was now called upon to handle for the first time. His rough, unpleasant style was frequently the object of censure.'

E. Spuller, who was Goblet's successor as Minister of Foreign Affairs (February 1889), and Mariani, who came to Rome on de Moüy's recall, failed in their attempts to stem the hostile current that was sweeping all before it in France,<sup>2</sup> but they

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenirs et causeries d'un diplomate*, Paris, Plon, 1909, pp. 257-8.

<sup>2</sup> The following telegram from Ambassador Menabrea, dated March 7, 1889, is important in connection with the story of the interruption of Franco-Italian commercial relations.

(Private.) In compliance with your despatch of the fourth of this month, I yesterday informed Monsieur Spuller of Your Excellency's willingness to open fresh negotiations, if not for a treaty of commerce, at least for an understanding concerning a *modus vivendi* calculated to improve commercial relations between France and Italy, and obtain a result similar to that obtained by the Convention of January 15, 1879. Spuller declared his readiness to second Your Excellency's efforts in so far as is possible without appealing to the Chamber, which body is daily becoming more 'protectionist,' not from conviction, but for reasons of ballot. With regard to these new commercial agreements, however, Spuller stipulates that they be made subservient to the settling of the Tunis question. To this I replied that I had not been authorised to deal with the Tunis question, but that I would, nevertheless, inform Your Excellency of his stipulation. Hereupon Spuller hastened to explain that he had not meant that one should be made subservient to the other, but only that they should be dealt with simultaneously. I deemed it better not to continue this discussion, and merely reminded Monsieur Spuller of what our position in Tunis had once been, and of what it had now become under the Protectorate which France has assumed. In this unexpected demand of Spuller's I once more perceive the same current which promised us support in our definite occupation of Tripoli, in exchange for certain concessions on our part in Tunis. This system may be traced back to Monsieur Ferry, who on two different occasions

did not refrain from certain declarations that amounted to a condemnation of an hostility that exceeded all bounds. In a diary concerning his diplomatic receptions, Crispi notes on January 5, 1890:—

‘Monsieur Mariani read me a letter from Spuller. The Minister herein requests his Ambassador to inform me that he appreciates the words I spoke before the House when the law abolishing the differential tariffs was under discussion. Mariani was charged to express the Minister’s thanks to me. Spuller is anxious that the relations between the two countries should become more cordial, and is prepared to do everything in his power to improve the economic conditions.

‘Mariani read me a letter he has addressed to Spuller against the correspondent of the *Havas* Agency at Rome. He describes his strange conduct, and points out to the Minister that this method can never result in any good to either nation.

‘Besides the *Havas*, Monsieur Lavallette also serves the *Matin*, and that journal’s hostility towards Italy is well known. Mariani desires that this individual, who serves a semi-official agency, should sever his connection with a paper which is unfriendly to us.’

On receiving the Italian Ambassador at Paris on the tenth of the preceding October, Spuller himself had protested in ‘*most violent language*’ against French journalism,<sup>1</sup> and on the fourth of December following he had not concealed his feelings from General Menabrea.

offered us the support of France in occupying Tripoli, on condition that we would renounce our claims in Tunis.

I will forward Your Excellency an official report of this interview, during which Spuller displayed friendly intentions, while obviously acting under compulsion.

MENABREA.

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Crispi, *Foreign Policy*, p. 344.

PARIS, 5/12/1889. 2.10 P.M.

Your telegram of December first, informing me of Your Excellency's interview with Mariani, has been confirmed by a communication from Mariani to Spuller, who yesterday expressed to me his satisfaction with its results. He assured me that he has to face the determined opposition of a party which is seeking to overthrow him by accusations of too much forbearance in dealing with Italy, a forbearance, they declare, which is prejudicial to French interests. This notwithstanding however, he is determined to continue his efforts to improve the relations now prevailing between the two countries, and to establish a *modus vivendi* calculated to satisfy the demands of their respective interests. A violent article, which appeared in the *Figaro* to-day, voices the hostile sentiment which at present prevails against Italy. Against this opposition party, however, which is our worst enemy, a new and far milder party has now arisen, under the leadership of Léon Say, which champions a more liberal economic policy.

MENABREA.

Monsieur A. Billot, whom Spuller appointed ambassador at Rome on the death of Mariani, had received instructions to endeavour to 'smooth over all difficulties.' In a work of his,<sup>1</sup> which is not free from prejudice, errors, and intentional omissions, he has related the main events of Italian political life between 1881 and 1899. Immediately upon his arrival he was informed that the correspondents of the *Havas* Agency and of the *Figaro* (one of these, Lavallette, was the same individual whose conduct had been censured by Mariani) had but the day before been expelled from Italy. This severe measure impressed him unfavourably, despite the fact that a

<sup>1</sup> *La France et l'Italie, Histoire des années troubles.* Paris, Plon, 1905.



German journalist had been expelled at the same time,<sup>1</sup> and Billot ingenuously revealed the state of his feelings at the moment of entering upon his career at Rome, by listening to the slanderous insinuation that Crispi had not been uninfluenced in his decision by the fact that those journalists had announced the failure of 'a private bank, in whose prosperity, it was said, Crispi had every reason to be deeply interested. This was sufficient to determine the expulsion'!<sup>2</sup>

The new ambassador immediately applied for an audience, and was received on the very day of his arrival. The Hon. Crispi informed the Embassy at Paris of this visit, by means of the following telegram:—

ROME, 13 April, 1890.

*The Italian Embassy, Paris.*

Monsieur Billot arrived this morning; he immediately applied for an audience, and I received him at five P.M.

He acquainted me with the circumstances under which his appointment had taken place, and explained his delay in coming to Rome. He told me he had explained to Ribot what he proposed to say to Spuller concerning his line of conduct towards Italy, viz., as regards the Italian colonial policy, to place no obstacles in the way of our expansion; as regards the question of Tunis, so to regulate matters that Italians may feel and be treated throughout the

<sup>1</sup> The Syndicate of the Parisian Press sent a delegation to Monsieur Ribot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to protest against the severe measures adopted by the Italian government. Ribot was forced to reply that there was no ground for diplomatic action, but in the course of an interview with Ressman, the Italian *chargé d'affaires*, he discussed with him the circumstances that had led to the expulsion of the correspondent of the *Havas Agency*. Ressman replied that the attention of the French Government had long ago been called to that correspondent's hostile tendencies, and that all warnings having proved vain, severe measures had become necessary. He added that, in his opinion, those numerous Italians who were daily being unexpectedly expelled from France in consequence of slight misdemeanours, many of whom had long resided in this country, and were forced to leave their families in direst want, were far more to be pitied than these paid slanderers.

<sup>2</sup> *La France et l'Italie, Histoire des années troubles*, p. 177.

Regency as if they were at home. He said that, as far as all other questions were concerned, he intended to act in a friendly manner and seek to smooth over all difficulties, Mariani, to whose memory he was grateful, having prepared the way for him in this undertaking. I, in turn, informed him that my intentions were in all ways identical with his own; that the French press was not friendly to us, which fact did not prevent my loving France, loving her, indeed, as a Frenchman might, without, however, forgetting my duty, as a Minister, of defending the interests of Italy. I reminded him that I had found the Triple Alliance an accomplished fact, and that, as a man of honour, I was bound to be loyal to it. I told him that I had been accused of misdemeanours of which I was innocent, such as the Florentine incident and that of Massowah, in both of which we were in the right, as all Europe has since acknowledged. I related to him that in 1877, at which time I was not Minister but President of the Chamber, I had been to Berlin and Gastein to see Prince Bismarck, with whom I had previously been in correspondence; that on my way I had visited Paris and seen Gambetta; that Gambetta had begged me to make overtures to Bismarck concerning disarmament; that on my way back from Germany I had visited Paris once more, and acquainted Gambetta, E. de Girardin, and others with what I had said and heard, stating to them that, as regards disarmament, Bismarck ardently desired it, but believed it to be impossible. In conclusion I declared that, on my accession to office, my wish and hope had been to serve as a link between France and Germany, and to prevent the Triple Alliance from becoming prejudicial to France;

that such were still my intentions, and that he would always find me ready for any action that might bring Italy and France nearer together, against which latter country it would be folly to wage war, and whose existence I, with the majority of Italians, considered necessary for the welfare of Europe, and especially of Italy, on account not only of the geographical position of France but also of her traditions, of her affinity with ourselves, etc. . . .

I found Monsieur Billot both courteous and congenial, and I think I am not mistaken in concluding that he also carried away a favourable impression of myself.

CRISPI.

As a matter of fact, although Crispi neglected no opportunity of displaying his friendly intentions towards France, the policy of that country towards Italy showed no sign of changing, and Ambassador Billot not only did nothing to smooth over difficulties, but undertook a very different task, to which he himself confesses in his book.

The Florence speech,<sup>1</sup> he says, conveyed the impression that Crispi was more than ever convinced of the usefulness of the Triple Alliance, and already determined upon its renewal on its expiration, or perhaps even before. . . . As long as Crispi remained in power our diplomacy had but to apply itself patiently and by *conciliatory action to facilitating the evolution*, which in time, interest would undoubtedly determine.<sup>2</sup>

The *conciliatory action* was displayed by French diplomacy in every question that arose, beginning with the Anti-Slavery Conference at Brussels, where France did not even take the trouble to conceal her chagrin at the position Italy had acquired in Ethiopia. As for *facilitating the evolution*, Billot did not hesitate to employ illicit methods, of which Crispi complained in the following telegram of November 12, 1890 :—

<sup>1</sup> Delivered on October 3.

<sup>2</sup> *La France et l'Italie, Histoire des années troubles*, Paris, Plon, 1905, p. 177.

The French government, true to the traditions of the First Republic, is exercising Republican propaganda in Italy, and spending money on the Opposition press. Journalists known to be enemies of the Monarchy are continually going to Palazzo Farnese (the French Embassy), where long confabulations take place, and for some months past emissaries have been arriving from Paris charged with aiding and abetting those who are hostile to our institutions. Monsieur M. . . . of the P. . . . has been here recently, and his conduct was most reprehensible.

My correct and irreproachable attitude towards the Bonapartes, who are connected with our royal family, at a time when discord was rife in France, should be proof sufficient that I make use of no hidden weapons against the Government of the Republic.

Of course Billot declares that the Italian government failed to second the desire of his own to restore friendly and mutually advantageous relations, and he cites the incident of the launching of the *Sardegna* in corroboration of his assertion.

This ironclad, he declares, was to have been launched at Spezia during the latter half of September, and the Italian papers had announced that the King would probably be present. Wishing to return the visit an Italian fleet had once paid to Toulon when the President of the Republic was there, the French Ministry 'unhesitatingly decided' to send a French squadron to Spezia to do homage to King Humbert, and on August 28 the French Ambassador communicated this determination to the *Consulta*, requesting to be informed of the date fixed for the launching. Crispi, however, hastened to reply that he 'did not think His Majesty had any intention of going to Spezia,' and three days later he caused the following despatch to be published by the *Stefani*:—



SPEZIA, 31 August.

The *Sardegna* will be launched on September 21. As has already been announced, His Majesty the King will be in Florence on that day for the inauguration of the monument to King Victor Emmanuel, and has therefore appointed His Royal Highness the Duke of Genoa to represent him at the launching of the *Sardegna*.

In transcribing this despatch Billot omits the words 'as has already been announced,' but he is careful to enumerate the various conjectures that were made both in France and Italy in explanation of this 'sudden decision of Crispi's,' and he hesitates as to whether to accept the explanation that the Minister was actuated by a desire to please Germany by preventing an episode which would tend to draw Italy and France closer together, or that other, which was founded on circumstances connected with the home policy. Be this as it may, he concludes with the declaration that 'no one hesitated to throw the entire responsibility upon Crispi.'

But the true version of this matter is not the one given by Billot. The Italian government could not but have been gratified by this courteous act on the part of France, and it was absurd to doubt this, for Italy had been the first to send a squadron to Toulon. What had annoyed the King was the discussion in the French papers concerning the advisability of the act, in the course of which discussion not only had the idea of the visit been severely criticised, but, as was the custom in those days, insulting language concerning Italy and her Sovereign had been freely indulged in.

The decision which the French government finally announced had been arrived at through so much wrangling that it had lost all semblance of spontaneity. This was not the first time the press had served the French policy an ill turn, and it was His Majesty himself who, without waiting for Crispi to express an opinion, decided not to attend the launching of the *Sardegna*. Billot's communication to the *Consulta* was made on August 27—and not on the twenty-eighth, as he had stated

—and the following telegram also bears the date of the twenty-seventh.

*To His Excellency General Pallavicini,*

*First Aide-de-Camp to His Majesty, at Montechiari.*

The French Ambassador has requested me to inform him when His Majesty the King is going to Spezia, and has named his Government's intention of sending a part of the French fleet to pay homage to His Majesty. I await His Majesty's orders as to what answer I am to make to Monsieur Billot.

CRISPI.

This telegram had hardly been despatched when Crispi received a letter from Rattazzi, Minister of the Royal Household, written at Montechiari on August 26, and communicating the King's wishes in the following terms:—

‘The French press still continues to discuss the proposed visit of the French squadron to Spezia on the occasion of the launching of the *Sardegna*. Your Excellency may shape your course on the knowledge that His Majesty does not intend to be present at that ceremony.’

Crispi, who heartily approved of the King's decision, informed Billot of it, and telegraphed to Paris on the 28:

*The Italian Embassy, Paris.*

In thanking Monsieur Ribot for his courteous intention, you may inform him, if you have occasion to see him, that His Majesty the King does not propose going to Spezia for the launching of the *Sardegna*, nor can the manœuvres of our fleet form an inducement for the proposed visit, as these are already finished.

CRISPI.

Although the Hon. Crispi's withdrawal from government, in consequence of the parliamentary vote of January 21, 1891,

was unanimously welcomed by the French press as a most fortunate event, it nevertheless failed to improve the attitude of France towards Italy. An immediate return to the conventional commercial relations between the two countries was not to be expected, for France was still dominated by that spirit of protectionism which had rendered the stipulation of a new treaty of commerce impossible in the early months of the year 1888; but some proof of better intentions and some slight encouragement to the partiality Minister Rudinì was supposed to entertain for France might indeed have been vouchsafed by renouncing the differential tariffs which Crispi had abolished, on our side, as early as January 1, 1890. The truth was that, through Crispi, France had fought Italy because of her alliance with Germany, and was not more willing to content herself with the friendly declarations of the new Cabinet than she had been to content herself with the oft-repeated friendly declarations of Crispi himself. She demanded Italy's withdrawal from the Triple Alliance, and her ambassador at Rome looked forward with confidence to the expiration of the treaty, that is to say, to the twentieth of May 1892:

‘Although Minister Rudinì was naturally reticent about manifesting his intentions, various reasons, nevertheless, led to the supposition that, at heart, he was of the number of those who desire to see Italy regain complete liberty of action on the expiration of the Triple Alliance.’<sup>1</sup>

But this illusion was shortlived, for the Hon. di Rudinì, who had summoned Count d’Arco, as open adversary of the Triple Alliance, to collaborate with him at the *Consulta*, after a few months of wavering, suddenly renewed the treaty (June 1891), which would not expire for another twelvemonth.

Having renewed the treaty of 1887 as it stood, the Hon. di Rudinì initiated that ‘double policy’ whose first result was to deprive us of the unconditional support of our allies, without in any way disarming French hostility. The only advantage

<sup>1</sup> *La France et l’Italie, Histoire des années troubles*, p. 287.

derived from this policy was that it modified, to a certain extent, the language of the French press, but public opinion in France did not alter, as the deplorable excesses of Aigues-Mortes plainly showed. In order to induce our Trans-Alpine neighbours to regard us with less malevolence, Italy was forced to make an unrequited sacrifice of her rights in Tunis, and it was the Hon. di Rudinì who, in the course of his two terms of office, brought about this state of affairs, by renouncing our veto concerning the fortifications at Biserta, and by the Italo-Tunisian Convention of September 28, 1896.

It appears, moreover, that he did not stop here. On October 13, 1891, Monsieur Giers, the Russian Chancellor, who was passing through Italy, was invited by King Humbert to visit him at Monza. The Marchese di Rudinì was present at the interview. The conversation turned upon the political condition of Europe and the necessity of striving to maintain peace. The King is reported to have informed Baron Blanc that in the course of this interview it had been established that Russia would intervene on our behalf in case of a *casus fæderis*. The possibility of such intervention becomes explicable only in the light of the supposition that Italy, offended by France, should renounce the *casus fæderis* for the benefit of her allies, and that these allies should do the same in case the *casus fæderis* should prove to be to their advantage. In either alternative Russia would intervene as a mediator, and would become the arbiter of the peace of Europe. But it should be borne in mind that the importance of the point at issue being entirely disregarded, the pacification would always be at the expense of the weakest party.

Crispi composed his second Ministry in December 1893, on the morrow of the painful events at Aigues-Mortes, where so many Italian labourers had been killed or wounded. This event gave rise to great indignation throughout Italy, which was heightened later on by the verdict of the court of Angoulême acquitting the murderers. There immediately arose the delicate question of indemnities to the victims or their families. The French government declared its readiness to bring a Bill before the Chamber for the payment of 420,000 francs, but demanded that the Italian government recognise its obligation to disburse the sum of 30,000 francs as an



indemnity to such French citizens residing in Italy as had suffered injury during the popular uprisings which had been brought about by the events above mentioned. This was an unjust and unprecedented demand, but in order to put an end to the painful incident, Crispi ordered the payment of the 30,000 francs without further investigation of the claims advanced.

The feeling aroused in Italy by the manifestations of hatred which had led to the tragedy of Aigues-Mortes, and by which it had been accompanied, provided the French government with a pretext for military preparations along the Italian frontier. But when Crispi, on his return to office, found himself obliged to reinforce the army and once more despatch to Sicily certain ironclads which had but recently been recalled, and this for the purpose of re-establishing public order which had been seriously deranged, the French press insisted on seeing in these measures nothing more nor less than the prelude to a speedy declaration of war! The Italian Ambassador at Paris reported that this fresh journalistic campaign was arousing anxiety even in French parliamentary circles, and Crispi was actually obliged to declare, both directly and through the Chanceries of the friendly Powers, that these fears were not only futile, but that they even verged on absurdity.

Passing through Madrid on March 19, 1894, the Duke of Cambridge, the venerable head of the British Army, expressed to Ambassador Maffei the astonishment he had experienced on finding that the troops along the Franco-Italian frontier had been greatly reinforced and appeared fully equipped for war, 'as if the whole region, from Cannes to Ventimiglia, had suddenly become the scene of a military occupation.'

The portfolio of Foreign Affairs had been entrusted to the former Ambassador at Constantinople, Baron Blanc, who was well acquainted with the international situation. France, as we have said, was already in arms, while our relations with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and England, which had been so cordial up to the year 1891, had been growing steadily colder for the last three years. Not only did Baron Blanc seek, in so far as was possible, to renew that intimacy which had yielded such excellent results during the rule of Bismarck in Germany, but he also determined to attempt to check the vindictive

policy of France by demonstrating to that country how sincere was our desire to possess her friendship.

Only an ambassador possessing great influence at Paris could accomplish this, and the Hon. Blanc was fully persuaded that this mission could best be fulfilled by Count Nigra, who was then at Vienna, but who had for many years been Ambassador to France, having first been accredited to the Empire and then to the Republic until the year 1876. The following correspondence reveals Blanc's intentions, of which Crispi fully approved.

(Private.)

ROME, 18/3/1894.

*To Count Nigra, Italian Embassy, Vienna.*

The Prime Minister joins me in begging you to render an important service to your King and Country by returning to Paris.

My knowledge of your lofty patriotism convinces me that no minor consideration will cause you to hesitate, for you, better than any other, will be able to second our efforts in a work of pacification which demands especial attributes of authority and influence.

Consider the serious conditions prevailing in this country at the present moment, which call more urgently than ever for that self-sacrificing devotion with which you have so frequently served the public cause in the past.

BLANC.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 18/3/1894.

*To His Excellency Blanc, Rome.*

Were I persuaded that my presence in Paris could promote the work of pacification which His Majesty's government proposes to undertake, no personal consideration should prevent my acceptance of the offer which has been made to me in such flattering language. But I am convinced that

certain incidents in my diplomatic past, which are only too well known, must of necessity preclude me for all time from representing my country in Paris. I need hardly remind you that these very incidents forced the Depretis Ministry to recall me from that city in 1876. Under the circumstances I am obliged to refuse a mission which I am positive I could not fulfil. I have reason to believe, moreover, that my removal would produce an unfavourable impression here, where my efforts appear to be highly appreciated. I will not urge this last argument, for I am not vain enough to suppose that another would be unable to accomplish as much in my place; but I must emphasise my unfitness for the Paris mission, concerning which my conviction remains unshaken.

NIGRA.

(Private.)

19/3/1894.

*To Count Nigra, Italian Embassy, Vienna.*

Your acceptance would possess the inestimable advantage of confirming Count Kálnoky's programme and your own, by demonstrating that peaceful alliances are consistent with friendly relations both with France and Russia. Your refusal would seriously compromise the possibility of carrying out such a programme.

Present necessities make it incumbent upon the Government once more to appeal to your patriotism and to your regard for His Majesty's wishes.

CRISPI.

(Private.)

VIENNA, 19/3/1894.

*To His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

An attempt may and should be made to carry out the programme alluded to, but precisely because of

the dubiety of the result, and the arduous nature of the undertaking, careful choice should be made of the person best adapted. I am not that person, and my antecedents have, moreover, entirely unfitted me for the Paris post. Do me the honour to believe this, for I am positive of what I affirm. I should be delighted to employ what strength I still possess in the way His Majesty and Your Excellency desire, but I consider it both morally and politically impossible that I should return to Paris, and such a step would impede rather than promote the achievement of the programme you have in view. I write this not to the Minister but to my friend, and I beg you not to urge me further, and thus render more painful to me the necessity in which I am placed of refusing to comply with a request of yours. I am serving you faithfully and devotedly here, and I flatter myself that both governments are satisfied with my endeavours.

NIGRA.

Several of the most influential French statesmen, the ex-ministers Léon Say and Maurice Rouvier among others, cordially welcomed the endeavour on the part of the Crispi Ministry to improve the state of Franco-Italian relations.

In April, Rouvier came to Rome in secret, and had two interviews with Crispi, one on the fourteenth the other on the sixteenth of that month, in the course of which it was established that simultaneous action should take place in Paris for the purpose of inducing the French government and the Parisian press to co-operate in bringing about a better understanding, which would be based upon a revival of commercial intercourse by means of a concession mutually granting the conditions of the most-favoured nation, and of the cession to France of the Tunis-Goletta railway. The first obstacle to be overcome was, of course, the hostility of public opinion in France, of which the Government, then presided over by Casimir Périer, was the slave. Casimir Périer, informed by



Rouvier of the result of his interviews with Crispi, expressed his approval of the main points, even declaring to Rouvier that : 'our present policy has no better result than to *éterniser et aggraver la Triplice*, which is not the cause but the consequence of misunderstandings.' He further observed that if he had hitherto been deterred from concluding an agreement by the consideration that this would but strengthen the position of one who was looked upon as an enemy to France, he must now admit that Crispi's straightforward action had disabused him of this prejudice, and that he recognised the possibility that this statesman might accomplish in Italy that which no other had been able to achieve or had even dared to attempt. With regard to the commercial agreement, Casimir Périer said that the protectionist current in France had overflowed its bounds, and that something should certainly be done to check a tendency which was also politically disastrous, but that he feared the opposition of the South, on account of its wines. He concluded by declaring that, to begin with, it would be necessary to make sure of the Chamber.

On May 30 the Casimir Périer Cabinet found itself in a minority in the Chamber. It gave place to the Dupuy Cabinet, wherein Monsieur Hanotaux had the management of Foreign Affairs. On June 24 the Italian anarchist Caserio assassinated Sadi Carnot, the President of the Republic, at Lyons. The Italian government and nation, deeply moved by this crime, manifested their sympathy with such earnestness that many in France saw therein the revelation of sentiments whose existence they had heretofore doubted. Unfortunately, however, the good effects of these manifestations were almost entirely destroyed by the ill-usage to which Italians residing in France were subjected on this occasion, and by the animosity this persecution naturally aroused in Italy.

In July Rouvier once more resumed his efforts by appealing to Minister Hanotaux, who promised that, during the recess upon which Parliament was about to enter, he should be sent to Italy to discuss the bases for an agreement with Crispi. But when it came to specifying his *desiderata*, Hanotaux demanded that Italy should make unqualified recognition of the French protectorate in Tunis, and accept a convention for the neutralisation of the Harrar. In compensation he would

promise not to raise any difficulties with regard to the occupation of Kassala by Italy, which question did not interest France, and to refrain from intervention either for or against Italy in Ethiopia. Nothing was said of commercial relations; nothing was said of Tripoli.

Monsieur Rouvier, who was forced to conclude that an *entente* with Italy was not honestly desired, reluctantly relinquished his undertaking.

Some light is thrown upon the policy of France towards Italy by the letters addressed to Crispi by Ressman, who had succeeded General Menabrea as Ambassador at Paris. We transcribe a few extracts from these letters, at the same time calling attention to the fact that, thanks to his long residence in France and his propitiatory nature, Ressman was optimistic in his appreciation of the state of affairs.

‘The situation is perfectly clear in this country. France does not wish for war at present. In any case, as no formal treaty exists with Russia, and as France has only the hope or perhaps a promise of help from that country in case she should be attacked, she is naturally unwilling to become the aggressor, and seeks to avoid provocation in so far as is possible. Ceaseless underhand machinations maintain the country in a state of unrest, and anxious glances are being cast in all directions. Ever quick to mistrust, France mistrusts us more than any one else, and she is especially watchful of Your Excellency, whom she suspects. She is as yet in doubt whether to hope or fear. The consequence is that the wildest interpretations of each and all of your acts find easy credence here, are eagerly discussed, and not infrequently determine the attitudes of certain members of the Government itself.’—(24 Jan. 1894.)

‘MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRESIDENT, AND VERY DEAR

FRIEND,—I did not wish to worry you with empty letters on my return to Paris, and have therefore refrained from writing. Nevertheless, I have laboured indefatigably and to the best of my ability to promote, in so far as lies within my province, the work of pacification which you are carrying on in so masterly a manner at home, and which, as regards our relations with this country, must eventually lead to those results which your policy has in view. There is no doubt that the horizon in the direction of the Italian frontier is gradually brightening, that there is less intransigence here, and that they are beginning to do you justice, what injustice they may once have done you having been, after all, but the outcome of those apprehensions to which your patriotism and ability have given rise on more than one occasion. Another favourable symptom is the manner in which the Chamber passed the currency agreement bill. Formerly the bare idea that Italy might benefit by this agreement would have sufficed to arouse protests.

‘On several occasions already, in the course of purely confidential conversations with Monsieur Casimir Périer, I have led him to broach the subject of the commercial treaties, merely by expressing the hope that some proof of goodwill would be vouchsafed us here. His personal influence with the Chamber is great, and his intentions are good. Of this I see proof in the fact that at a recent meeting of the Ministers of Finance, of Commerce, and of Agriculture, he brought up the question of the possibility of obtaining a majority in case of even partial agreements with us on the basis of the minimum tariff. Without mentioning this meeting, he informed me yesterday that he would not venture

to propose an agreement with us to the Chamber, unless this were preceded by a more acceptable one with another Power (Switzerland), and that, as regards Italy, one insurmountable difficulty would always remain, namely that of the wines, because, owing to the excessive quantity now produced in the south of France, all the wine-growers would rise up against a minister who should propose to throw the gates still wider open to Italian competition.

‘As for that difficulty,’ I replied, ‘even though the maximum tariff be lowered to a very considerable extent, certain compensations on our part might still make an agreement possible. With regard to this point, Your Excellency will doubtless deem it advisable, in view of future negotiations, to have a study made, such as I have requested Count Antonelli to make here, of the concessions we might offer in compensation for the application of the French minimum tariff. For the time being I could wish to be informed of the intentions of His Majesty’s government, and of the extent to which concession might eventually be carried.

‘Monsieur Casimir Périer, who has influenced the greater part of the press in our favour, tells me that he has personally interviewed no less than eight editors for this purpose, and he expressed his satisfaction with the tone which now prevails throughout the Italian press with regard to France. At the *Quai d’Orsay* this particular is considered important.’—(22 *March*.)

‘Despite the attitude this despicable press has assumed towards the economic question since the King’s trip to Venice, and the bitter disappointment of not seeing us reduce our army ; despite the half-



negative, half-dilatory declarations made to me by Casimir Périer, I do not despair of achieving a commercial agreement when the most pressing questions of our home policy shall have been satisfactorily settled. Certain members of the Cabinet are partial to us, Burdeau most of all. Some time since this Minister requested the Director-General of Customs to prepare for him a comparative study between our conventional tariff and the French minimum tariff. The Director, Monsieur Pallain, who drew up the report, and told me of it in confidence, assured me that, according to his calculations, the French minimum tariff would be decidedly more advantageous for us than our conventional tariff would be for France. He also gave it as his opinion that, in view of possible future negotiations, a similar report should be prepared on our side. You will decide as to the advisability of adopting this measure, in order to be fully prepared should this fruit ever ripen! (*se matureranno*) After all, much time is employed less purpose in the government offices. Meanwhile Rouvier himself is active in his endeavours to bring about an understanding, the impressions he brought home with him after his interviews with Your Excellency being of the most favourable and practical nature. The Swiss and Spaniards are listening at the keyhole. Therefore, when the time comes, it will be necessary to act swiftly and secretly. Until the time does come, I can only hope that our press, which has already sufficiently emphasised the desire of our country and the government's dispositions, may maintain a prudent and dignified silence. I may be mistaken in continuing to believe in a not too remote agreement, but I know how easily they pass

from one extreme to another in this country, and my ardent desire to place such a victory to Your Excellency's credit makes me look upon its difficulties as less insurmountable than they may appear to some.

‘Although this Cabinet does indeed contain a couple of Méline’s janissaries (the Ministers of Commerce and of Agriculture, this latter being especially savage), we must nevertheless hope that the Prime Minister may retain his post, he being a man of prompt decision, and holding views which would render it a matter of no great difficulty for the party favourable to us to carry him with them. Unfortunately he has already suffered defeat at the hands of both Socialists and Radicals, and now, by disappointing the hope which Spuller’s proclamation of the “new spirit” had once more aroused in the clericals, he exposes himself to the plottings of the priests.

Our enemies have also sought to disparage us by means of the accusations brought against General Migaglia, whose arrest and expulsion have produced

‘a profound impression here. But before the week great this subject will cease to be discussed, and the very just observations contained in Your Excellency’s address to the Chamber came as a well-timed proof that we do not court irritating discussions. . . .

‘On the day before yesterday I saw our Verdi off. He has been as active here as a man of forty, and was indefatigable from first to last. For five hours every afternoon he directed the rehearsals of his *Falstaff*, and having brought the opera safely into port and obtained a triumphal success, he climbed up to the lantern-loft of the Eiffel Tower, by way of relaxation! It is true that as early as 1889, the

famous architect of this monument, foreseeing similar visits, had had a piano placed in the lantern-loft. In April of next year (1895) the great master is to give his *Otello* here, and he hopes to return and himself prepare for its representation. It was impossible to confer the *Grand Cordon* of the Legion of Honour upon him, as had been intended, no French master ever having held it. Rossini died a simple *Commandeur de l'Ordre Rouge*.—(26 April.)

‘I have thanked the Almighty from the bottom of my heart for having once more preserved you from the attack of a vile assassin, and also for having prevented a murderous ball from destroying our country’s budding hopes. Although at the moment the shot was fired, a sense of bitterness may have flooded your soul, and forced you once more to recognise to what depths of ingratitude and unreasoning passion can drag the human beast, I am convinced that you must now be greatly consoled and gratified beyond measure when you look about you and see to what a demonstration of esteem this insane attack has given rise throughout Europe, a demonstration which loudly proclaims and glorifies your high mission, and commands respect even in the ranks of your adversaries.

‘I immediately thanked the President of the Council and the Republic’s Minister of Foreign Affairs on your behalf and in the words of your telegram. The President of the Council had explicitly declared to me that his congratulations were also those of all the members of the French government. Several other Ministers whom I met yesterday at the Longchamp races, which Carnot

had invited me to attend, together with other members of the Diplomatic Corps, individually expressed to me the high esteem in which Your Excellency is held by them.

‘Not satisfied with having telegraphed to you, Count d’Aquila came to beg me to convey his congratulations to you in writing. Lord Dufferin did the same, adding that he cherished the pleasantest memories of all his dealings with you.’  
—(18 *June*.)

‘Last night the President of the Republic<sup>1</sup> gave a dinner to all the foreign representatives accredited to this Government and to the especial envoys who had been charged by their Sovereigns to represent them at Carnot’s funeral. I sat at the left of the President, who continues to treat me as a friend, and conversed at length with him, seeking by every word to influence him in favour of the hopes expressed to me by Your Excellency in your telegram of June 29. Monsieur Casimir Périer has a very receptive mind, and proof is not wanting that he is a man of initiative and determination. He is sincere in his hope that our two countries may be brought closer together, and is gratified by the favour with which his nomination was welcomed in Italy. (I think it will be wise to encourage the insertion in our papers of frequent paragraphs expressing appreciation of himself, and the praise his attitude truly deserves.) He spoke with clear understanding and in laudatory terms of the work you have already accomplished and of that you still have in hand, and confessed that last December he

<sup>1</sup> Casimir Périer was elected President of the Republic on June 27, 1894.



would not have dared to hope for so happy a result. He was just to you in every way.'—(4 *July*.)

‘An opportunity for discussing our affairs with the President of the Republic presented itself unsought, and I gladly availed myself of it. At his invitation I went yesterday to Pont-sur-Seine (two and a half hours by rail from Paris, where he is spending his vacation on his mother’s vast and magnificent estate), to present him with the King’s reply to the letter announcing his election and to take leave of him before going away for my own holiday. He was extremely kind and affable, kept me to lunch with him, and from the hour of my arrival at half-past eleven until my departure at half-past four, never left me for a moment, taking much pleasure in accompanying me all over the extensive domains of the Périers—six hundred acres in all.

‘I will sum up briefly for you the political part of our long conversation.

‘The President sees no dark or threatening clouds on the horizon, and is confident that peace will be maintained. He gladly recognises the correct and courteous attitude of Germany towards France, and attributes the merit of it in part to the wisdom of the Emperor, in part also to the conciliatory disposition of my old friend and colleague Münster, who is ever anxious to avoid friction. He has not yet been officially informed who is to be Count Hoyos’ successor as Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Hoyos having decided to retire for private reasons. The President, however, is also of opinion that the appointment will be given to Wolkenstein, who is now Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

‘Casimir Périer spoke of Your Excellency, praising your achievements, recognising the difficulties you have overcome, and observing that, in the face of plain facts, the hostile press is being brought little by little to lay down its arms at your feet. Mention was made of the visit paid him by Bonghi, which did not . . . produce any very profound impression upon him! He alluded, without resentment, to the words concerning the Triple Alliance which were attributed to him at that time, and expressed his satisfaction that it had been Bonghi himself who had declared them apocryphal.

‘The two main points on which I was anxious to ascertain Monsieur Casimir Périer’s present opinion were, of course, the commercial question and that of the African boundaries. In the course of a recent private conversation both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of Customs expressed the same opinion to me, viz., that it will be possible, before the end of the year, to reconstruct a commercial agreement with Switzerland, as the majority of the less rabid protectionists themselves desire this. As I have already informed Your Excellency, the Director of Customs was always of opinion that by first opening negotiations with Italy it would be easier to overcome Switzerland’s hesitation, but the government follows the current of parliamentary opinion, and either doubts its power to sway this opinion or has not the courage to try. “An agreement with Switzerland would certainly be easier to negotiate,” the President said, “for the political conditions that prevail between the two Republics make such an agreement desirable. Nevertheless, you must not believe that political motives deter us from treating with Italy. The

difficulties are truly and purely of an economic nature, and are the result of competition!" As an illustration, he cited the matter of the wines. I replied that if, on the one hand, we considered to what an extent even the French minimum tariff is protectionist, and observe, on the other hand, that France now applies it to nearly every country, it becomes difficult to see a purely economic motive in the exclusion of Italy, especially as the loss would be mutual. As regards wine, I reminded him of repeated protestations on the part of the French Chamber of Commerce at Milan, in whose bulletin several articles have appeared demonstrating that France would find it to her advantage to take those wines, of which the wine industry at Bordeaux is ever in need, from Italy rather than from Spain.

'During Monsieur Casimir Périer's two terms of office as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I had so frequently and unreservedly expressed to him the desire that a mutually satisfactory boundary line might be established around Obock, and the possibility of friction between the two countries in Africa thus eliminated, that a fresh suggestion of a like nature on my part could neither surprise him nor appear inopportune. I acquainted him with all that has recently transpired between Monsieur Hanotaux and myself, informing him that the question had been left undecided, and I did not omit to point out the dangers of a situation where everything is left to chance, or where matters are regulated only in consequence of accomplished facts. I said that I thought the French Minister of Foreign Affairs would find the parliamentary recess an especially favourable moment for opening negotiations, which would then not be subject to daily pressure brought

to bear by the Colonial Commission, and I added that I was confident his overtures would not meet with a rebuff on Your Excellency's part. The President did not go into the matter, nor did he indulge in recriminations against the Anglo-Italian protocol, but showed himself well disposed towards us, and promised to consult Hanotaux on this point. I have no doubt he will do so, and that in a friendly spirit. Some time since, however, Hanotaux declared to me that before opening negotiations he must be assured of the possibility of an agreement. At that time he was not prepared to draw up a programme, and said that he would again give the matter his best attention. But should this examination lead him to the discovery of French rights to the *city* of Harrar, as he recently declared to Lord Dufferin it might do (?), I foresee that all the President of the Republic's good intentions would be of no avail. It cannot be denied, however, that the improvement in the general tone of the French press as regards ourselves must gradually prepare the ground, and if public opinion be also modified, the friends of Italy and other sober-minded citizens will be able more freely to exert their beneficent influence, to the confusion of chauvinistic and intransigent demagogues.

‘ At the present moment the Anarchists form the greatest source of anxiety for the French government. Now that it is too late, they see their mistake in having allowed the evil to spread so enormously. Threats rain upon every member of the government, and the revelations that result from arrests, perquisitions, and examinations are not calculated to allay apprehension. His natural daring and utter disregard of danger render



President Casimir Périer's position far more perilous than was that of his unfortunate predecessor.'—  
(24 *August*.)

'... I seized this opportunity of begging him to use his influence with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom I was to consult on the morrow (as I did yesterday, in fact) with regard to the intrigues which the Chefneux and their associates continue to carry on in Ethiopia. The fact that I had repeatedly complained to him of these same intrigues while he was still Minister of Foreign Affairs now made it easier for me again to broach the subject to him. He protested, as he has always done, that the Government has nothing to do with this matter and does not in any way encourage the machinations of certain traders or speculators. He promised me, moreover, to advise Monsieur Hanotaux to maintain strict watch.

'The delight of Verdi's old friend, Monsieur Ambroise Thomas, was unbounded on receiving through me the *Grand Cordon* of the Mauritian Order which Your Excellency had forwarded to me for him. He actually created me a *Baron* in the letter of thanks which he begged me to transmit to you, as I have the honour of doing herewith. It is indeed a pity that the warm friend you have in this French doyen of composers is no longer hale and hearty and able to exert his influence on our behalf. Knowing that in so doing I should be giving Verdi much pleasure, I suggested to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs that crosses be also bestowed upon Ricordi and Boito. My proposal was unhesitatingly accepted, and thus an adequate return has been made for the decorations you bestowed

upon the Directors and the Leader of the Orchestra at the Opera.'—(1 *November*.)

Many French personages came to Rome in the course of that year (1894) and were received by Crispi. Among the number were the Deputies Deloncle, Mermeix, Pichon, Léon Bourgeois, Ferdinand Brunetière, Senator R. Waddington, Emile Zola, and others. One and all promised to exert their influence with their friends in bringing about a better understanding between France and Italy, but once back in their own country they all either forgot their promise or found themselves powerless to help. 'Instead of seconding my efforts,' Crispi writes in his Diary, 'Billot has conspired with my enemies, and still continues to do so. He furthermore forwards envenomed reports to his Government.'

In January 1895 the recall of the Italian Ambassador from Paris caused a great sensation. For many years Ressman had been personally devoted to Crispi, and this circumstance rendered the Prime Minister's regret all the more poignant when he was forced to recognise that Ressman's action was inefficacious in combating Hanotaux's malignant and insidious policy. On *Thursday, January 6, 1895*, Crispi made the following entry in his Diary:—

'After all, Ressman was to have been recalled from Paris eight months ago, and I prevented this by taking his part with Baron Blanc. I have now been obliged to acknowledge that Ressman is incompetent to serve Italy efficaciously. . . . He possesses absolutely no authority with the French government.'

In his book, to which frequent allusion has been made,<sup>1</sup> Billot makes many inaccurate assertions concerning Ressman's recall. He attributes it entirely to Crispi—'for no one thought of making Baron Blanc responsible for this decision'—and alleges a personal motive, namely that Ressman was unsuccessful in obtaining satisfaction from the French govern-

<sup>1</sup> *France et Italie*, vol. ii. p. 96 and following.

ment for several articles which appeared in the *Temps*, and were injurious to the Italian Premier's prestige. It is true that Crispi was annoyed by this interference on the part of the French government's official organ in the personal campaign which Cavallotti was carrying on against him at the time, an interference which confirmed him in his opinion that certain French promoters and agents were accessory to this defamatory campaign. In one of the articles of the *Temps* Crispi recognised certain declarations which Billot had most imprudently made, in almost the precise terms, to a colleague in the Diplomatic Corps at Rome on the preceding fifteenth of December, which declarations had been reported to him. The following despatch shows Crispi's just resentment:—

ROME, 1 January, 1895.

*Ressman, Italian Ambassador, Paris.*

The *Temps* of December 30 justifies the attitude and confirms the hostility which the French Ambassador at Rome has recently displayed. Monsieur Billot has formed an exception among the foreign diplomats accredited to the Quirinal, inasmuch as he has conspired with our adversaries and forwarded inaccurate reports to his government. The language of which he has made use in the course of conversation with certain of his colleagues, has been most reprehensible, and proves that nothing can be accomplished between France and Italy so long as those whose aim it should be to bring about an agreement between the two countries labour rather to intensify the enmity which now prevails.

I write this merely for your enlightenment, convinced as I am that you also will be unable to succeed in the accomplishment of the mission I entrusted to you.

Billot and his government, however, are greatly mistaken both in their conclusions and in their policy. The Italian government will not succumb

in consequence of their conspiracies, no matter how powerful the foreign support they enjoy may be.

CRISPI.

But although Crispi was annoyed by Ressman's display of weakness on this occasion, the reasons for his recall were of an earlier date, and were substantially those set forth in the extract from the Diary above transcribed.

What Billot affirmed concerning the unfavourable impression produced upon the *allies* by the measure the Italian government saw fit to adopt, and their pretended exhortations to greater prudence, is, moreover, not only inaccurate, but entirely mendacious.

The following is an extract from Crispi's Diary :—

‘*January 6, 4.30 P.M.*—A visit from Baron von Bülow. Congratulations on Ressman's recall. He did not enjoy the confidence either of the English or of the German Ambassador.’

Count Tornielli, Ambassador in London, was appointed to Paris in Ressman's place. On February 18, 1895, he presented his credentials to Félix Faure, President of the Republic and successor to Casimir Périer, who had resigned on January 15 of that year. Thanks to his great tact, Tornielli, who was coldly received at first, was able, later on, to overcome all mistrust and worthily represent his country. The Franco-Italian relations did not change, but fresh incidents of an unpleasant nature were avoided. The Franco-Russian alliance, which was proclaimed for the first time from the rostrum of the Chamber on June 10, by the Ministers Hanotaux and Ribot, was certainly not calculated to inspire peaceful sentiments, and the French policy became more arrogant than ever, and more actively hostile to Italian interests in Ethiopia.

Of these events we shall speak elsewhere.



## CHAPTER VI

### FRENCH OPPOSITION TO ITALIAN CREDIT

Hostility of the French world of finance—War against Italian securities—Crispi seeks the intervention of German finance—Bismarck and the agreements of 1888—The ‘depreciation campaign’ of 1889—The French press unanimous in advocating the expulsion of Italian securities from France—German bankers once more come to the rescue, and form a Syndicate in 1890—Foundation of the *Istituto Italiano di Credito Fondiario*—Foundation of the *Banco Commerciale Italiano*, under Crispi’s auspices.

ONE of the weapons, the most powerful perhaps, which French hostility employed to punish Italy for her alliance with Germany, was the discredit she heaped upon our Consolidated Bonds and other Italian securities quoted at the Paris Bourse.

The conspiracy against us extended throughout the French world of finance, and was popularised by means of sensational literature, which described, in the daily papers, the miserable condition of the Italians, *forced to emigrate in a body when they were weary of feeding on grass, and continually harassed by brigandage!* It was declared that the Italian Exchequer was in a most precarious condition, being, indeed, on the verge of bankruptcy, and this appalling state of affairs was attributed to the military expenses occasioned by a foreign policy which was anti-French.

The hope of ‘starving us to it,’ as they said, of forcing us to abandon the Triple Alliance by the withdrawal of capital invested in Italian securities, and thus creating a state of international distrust of Italy, was certainly ill-founded. The injury, nevertheless, that accrued from this war without quarter assumed alarming proportions, owing to the fact that, from the very birth of the Kingdom, our financial dealings had been mainly with Paris, and Italian securities to the value of thousands of millions were now in French hands. As was to be expected, the opponents at home of the Italo-German

alliance took advantage of the ill-humour thus aroused, which went to swell the tide of vexation produced by the rupture of the treaty of commerce and the application of differential tariffs which were practically prohibitive. It was the duty of the Italian government to take the matter in hand without delay, and demand that the German government adopt such measures as were possible to mitigate the painful results to Italy of a policy which, however, was in every way advantageous to Germany.

Prince von Bismarck, to whom Crispi appealed early in 1888, willingly exerted his influence to induce the leading German banking houses to intervene in favour of Italian securities. In a letter of February 18 of that year, Minister Magliani wrote to Crispi:—

‘I did not reply at once as I wished to await the communication from the German bankers to our National Bank. This is not yet arrived. Meanwhile I think an answer might be compiled expressing our government’s satisfaction, and declaring that all necessary articles, documents, and information will be promptly forwarded, in order to place the German press in a position to open the campaign in favour of Italian credit, and stating that the form which we consider best adapted for financial operations at Berlin will also be made known.

‘We must clearly define our opinion from a technical point of view, concerning what is most expedient under the present circumstances. We can already declare that the most efficacious means will be—

- ‘1. To repurchase at the Paris Bourse as large a number of Italian securities as possible.
- ‘2. To induce German banks to honour Italian commercial bills, thus showing that confidence in us which France denies us at the present moment.

‘With my most affectionate regards, etc., etc.’

The Syndicate was composed of Bleichroeder, the *Disconto Gesellschaft*, and the German Bank, with whom were associated the English banking houses of Baring Brothers and Hambro, and the most important Italian banks. This combination was successful in arresting the depreciation of our Consolidated Bonds at the Paris Bourse, and the Italian Exchequer required this service by binding itself to entrust to the Syndicate the emission of certain railroad shares.

In 1889 the 'depreciation campaign' was resumed in Paris more vigorously than ever. On July 28 Crispi telegraphed as follows to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin :—

'For the last twenty days, by means of machinations organised by the Government of the Republic, Paris has been labouring to depreciate our Bonds, so that from 96 they have gone down to 92 and even to 90.

'Kindly beg the Prince to influence the same friendly banker to buy again as he did in 1888, and thus arrest a depreciation the causes for which no one is able to explain, and whose moral effect is fatal to our country.'

On August 2 the following reply arrived :—

'Not until last night, and after having communicated with Varzin, did the Under-Secretary of State inform me that the Chancellor had readily acceded to Your Excellency's request, and had issued instructions for measures calculated to mitigate the effects of the fall in the price of our Bonds which took place in July. Several papers will participate in the campaign, one, in fact, having already opened it on July 24, but in carrying out this operation the fact will be borne in mind that, for the last few days, a rise in prices has taken place. More energetic action, and the ulterior participation of Berlin

financiers, would become necessary only in case this rise be not maintained.'

These assurances were confirmed at Rome by the German Ambassador, as may be gathered from the following telegram despatched by Crispi to Count de Launay at Berlin on August 6 :—

' On the fourth of this month Count Solms came to assure me that His Excellency Prince Bismarck had taken steps to check the movement set afoot at the Paris Bourse for depreciating the value of Italian Bonds. He said that the bankers to whom His Excellency had appealed desire that any loans of which Italy may find herself in need, be negotiated with them. I replied that, for the present, there is no necessity for a loan, the outlay of the Exchequer being fully assured, but that should such an operation become necessary at any time, we would certainly negotiate with German bankers. Kindly confirm this declaration of mine to the Prince, and inform him that the work of depreciation has been resumed at the Paris Bourse, and urge the immediate necessity that Berlin financiers adopt measures to check the machinations of our adversaries, a result which they successfully achieved one year ago.'

But the intervention of the Berlin bankers was delayed. On the tenth of September the Italian Embassy at Paris once more telegraphed :—

' A malicious article in the *Matin* declares that a decree is pending in Italy for re-establishing the *corso forzoso*, in consequence of the fact that the Minister of the Treasury has sanctioned the emission of ninety millions of inter-provincial notes of five and ten *lire* each. The financial bulletins of this



paper, and of others as well, strongly urge the sale and expulsion of Italian securities.

‘The fact that Italian Bonds went down to 91 here to-day, has produced a great sensation in the Italian colony, some of its members demanding that His Majesty’s government adopt immediate measures for ‘preventing a panic which might seriously compromise our credit.’

Crispi followed up his advances at Berlin by again telegraphing on the same day :—

‘The German Cabinet assured us that the leading banks of Germany would immediately adopt active measures in favour of our Bonds should these fall below 93. They have now fallen to 91 at Paris and to 92 and a fraction at Berlin. The time is therefore come. I desire Your Excellency to open negotiations once more with the German Chancery, and this without delay, for the purpose of inducing Bleichroeder and others to enter upon the campaign for raising the price of our securities.

‘You will follow up my telegram of this day by pointing out to the German Chancery that the conspiracy against our 5 % at the Paris Bourse cannot be denied. The financial bulletins of the French papers reveal the fact of its existence, and one must now be blind not to see that the war which, for the time being, they may not carry on against us by force of arms, is being waged nevertheless, through this attack upon our credit. In the course of a few months our Bonds have gone down six points, and are still declining, thanks to false reports spread by means of the press.’

At the same time Crispi telegraphed to the Hon. Giolitti, who had succeeded Magliani as Minister of the Treasury :—

‘The Bonds still continue to depreciate at Paris, and as our 5 % alone is affected and no other foreign securities have suffered, energetic measures must be adopted without delay. In 1888 Magliani and I successfully withstood the attacks that were made upon us.

‘It appears to me that the same should be possible to-day. I have telegraphed to Berlin. Send for Grillo and Allievi and reconstruct the Syndicate. At that time we made a successful appeal to London, as Cantoni will tell you.’

The Hon. Giolitti hastened to reply :—

‘After my conference with Your Excellency a fortnight since, I requested *Commendatore* Grillo to write to the banker Bleichroeder in Berlin. The banker replied that the causes of the present fall appeared to him to differ from those of 1888, they being more general. He expressed anxiety concerning the deficit in the Italian budget, which he believes to be greater than it really is. He also fears the sale of the Pension Fund Shares. Nevertheless, he declared his readiness to co-operate with the National Bank. On the very day the understanding concerning the crisis was concluded, I consigned to *Commendatore* Grillo all papers necessary to expose the true conditions of our budget at Berlin, and I charged him to negotiate with Bleichroeder for the emission of one hundred and twenty-six millions in railroad shares, in co-operation with the group which had managed the previous emission. I furthermore authorised him to declare that if these negotiations were conducted on favourable terms, I would refrain from selling the Pension Fund Shares and would propose the creation of securities which

should be free of duty and be placed in Berlin and London. The main difficulties in forming the Syndicate would thus be removed, and the success of its action assured. I am still waiting for an answer. As soon as it arrives I will act, and also advise Your Excellency of its contents.'

On September 11, at Naples, Crispi received the German *chargé d'affaires*, Count von der Goltz, who made the following communication to him:—

'The German Government has undertaken to procure the intervention of German banks should Italian Bonds fall below 93.

'These Bonds having recently fallen to 92 and even to 91 and a fraction, the group of Berlin financiers, composed of the *Berlin Handelsgesellschaft* and of the *Deutsche Bank*, has declared its readiness to form a new portfolio of Italian Bonds to the value of fifty million *lire*, and also to facilitate "reports" and "Lombardirung" (loans on deposits).

'In consideration, however, of the fact that such operations not only do not offer any probability of profit, but may even mean a certain amount of risk, the group above named desires that, in compensation, the Italian government, in its future financial operations in foreign countries, should apply to its members before concluding elsewhere. The group in question enjoys the support of good English houses and of the *Crédit Mobilier* of France.

'Should His Excellency *Cavaliere* Crispi declare his readiness to accept the conditions above set forth, the group of German bankers will immediately arrange all details of the operation with Rome.

'If, at a future time, the Italian government

should desire to make some new issue, the above-named group, with the support of the German government, would undertake to induce the leading German banking houses to participate in the transaction.'

On the day following, September 12, the Hon. Crispi telegraphed to the Hon. Giolitti:—

'Last night the German *chargé d'affaires* came down from Rome for the express purpose of informing me that the group of German bankers is ready to open the campaign against French depreciation, on condition that the Italian government should first apply to its members in case of a loan. I accepted, and was assured that with this end in view, Bleichroeder would immediately communicate with our National Bank.

'We must strain every nerve to free ourselves from the tyranny of the French market, which the instability of that nation renders all the more dangerous.

CRISPI.'

Bleichroeder's intervention afforded some support to our Consolidated Bonds in Berlin, despite the fact that not all the millions promised were invested in our securities, and that several members of the Syndicate did not neglect to operate on Exchange for their own benefit, by again selling the Bonds they had acquired, as soon as a slight rise made a profit possible. In Paris the campaign was carried on by a committee of 'depreciators,' who called these securities 'la rente de Monsieur Crispi.' There was no doubt that this was a political campaign, and Crispi was never weary of impressing this fact upon the German government, in order to stimulate their interest.

In 1890 the leading German banks united in defence of Italian credit, but France still maintained her hostile policy. Menabrea wrote at this time:—



‘The campaign which has been carried on at this Bourse against Italian credit, and which appeared, at one time, to be on the decline, has now been resumed under altered conditions. In the first place, there is the new loan of seven hundred millions, which the French government is about to open, and the consequent demand that capital, instead of being placed in foreign securities, and especially in ours, which have begun to enjoy greater favour, be reserved to cover the above-named loan. Aside from this circumstance, there is the ever dominant desire to place every possible obstacle in the way of the Italian government, in the hope of obliging us to place our country at the mercy of France.’

Count Solms, the German Ambassador, wrote to Crispi on April 3:—

‘MON CHER PRÉSIDENT,—I have telegraphed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Berlin, as I promised you yesterday, informing him of your desire concerning Monsieur de Bleichroeder, to whom I despatched a private letter at the same time.

‘I have the satisfaction to be able to inform you to-day that I am advised by telegram from Berlin that, as soon as your interest in this financial matter became known there, strong pressure was brought to bear on Monsieur Bleichroeder (and this with the Chancellor’s approval), for the purpose of creating with his aid and that of the *Disconto Gesellschaft*, a strong German Syndicate in favour of this financial undertaking on the part of Italy. I am further informed that, although the success of this arrangement is not yet absolutely beyond doubt, it is, nevertheless, more than probable.

‘I am instructed to impart this information to

Your Excellency in strict confidence, and I am glad that my efforts promise so happy a result.'—(From the French.)

On that same day the banker S. Bleichroeder, a personal friend of Prince Bismarck's, telegraphed to Crispi:—

'I am gratified to be able to announce to Your Excellency that an understanding has been established between the group of banking houses and myself.'—(From the French.)

In the course of the year 1890 Crispi had undertaken to lend diplomatic support to the foundation of the *Istituto Italiano di Credito Fondiario*, with the aid of a German financial syndicate. This foundation was accomplished on the 25th of August of that year. On that day *Commendatore* Giacomo Grillo, Director-General of the National Bank, sent the following telegram to Crispi from Lucerne:—

'Protocol for foundation new *Credito Fondiario Italiano* signed to-day at Lucerne between Italo-German Syndicate, National Bank, and *Società Immobiliare*. The new institution, which will have a capital of one hundred millions, will begin with a working fund of thirty millions, one half to be paid in by National Bank, the other half by Syndicate and *Immobiliare*.  
GRILLO.'

On his return to office towards the close of 1893, Crispi found the same antagonism prevailing at Paris throughout the world of finance and among bankers. The visit which the heir to the Italian throne had paid at Metz, and which had taken place under the late Ministry, had been looked upon in France as a challenge, and the Bourse had not failed to take advantage of this circumstance. The plan which the French 'depreciators' had formed at that time was to bring down the Italian Bonds to 75, that is to say, to the level of the Spanish, and to place the exchange at 20%, thus enabling the French govern-

ment to checkmate Italy by denouncing the Currency Convention. The Italo-German Syndicate was reconstructed, but Prince Bismarck was no longer at the head of German affairs, and the Syndicate accomplished but little.

Towards the middle of the year 1894 the *Banco Commerciale Italiano* was founded in Italy, with German, Austrian, Swiss, and Italian capital to the amount of five millions. The foundation took place under the following circumstances.

The idea of founding an Italo-German bank was the outcome of the active measures the financiers of Germany had adopted in support of Italian credit, which support had been solicited by Crispi and encouraged by the Chancery of Berlin.

Urged to interest themselves in Italian affairs, the German bankers were naturally inclined to consider the advisability of creating an institution in Italy by means of which they would be able the better to superintend those affairs.

On December 21, 1893, shortly after his return to office, Crispi, on being informed of this project, which was still somewhat vague, but which the head of the Bleichroeder banking house, Schwabach, had exposed to our Ambassador, Count Lanza, immediately despatched a message of encouragement. The following documents will show how this idea materialised.

‘BERLIN, 3 June, 1894.

‘SIGNOR MINISTRO,—Monsieur Schwabach, the head of the Bleichroeder Bank, has just left my house. He is perhaps more anxious than are we ourselves to found a bank in Italy with the aid of German and Austrian capital, but he has heretofore been deterred from action by his associates in this matter who wished to await the solution of those financial questions which were still pending before our Parliament. Should His Majesty’s government succeed presently in procuring another favourable vote, he proposes to attempt again to rush his companions into a quick decision, and this he believes he will be able to do if he be but provided with a document proving that His Majesty’s government

would approve of the foundation of the bank in question.

‘In compliance with instructions received, I have repeatedly declared that such are the views of His Majesty’s government, but Monsieur Schwabach, who is urgent in his request, assures me that one word from the President of the Council would suffice, which should confirm the declaration it appears His Excellency made to a certain Monsieur Veil<sup>1</sup> who has recently been here, and who, on his return to Italy, had an interview with His Excellency Crispi. I do not know how much truth there may be in what Veil reported here after that interview. In any case, as this is in no way binding, my humble opinion is that it would be well for His Excellency the President of the Council to forward me a despatch which I could show Schwabach, and which should read more or less as follows: “I thank you for information forwarded. As Your Excellency is aware, His Majesty’s government would heartily welcome the foundation of a German bank in Italy, and trusts that the German bankers who appear inclined to participate in the creation of this institution by contributing their capital, may be convinced that the time has come when it will be to their own advantage to come to a final decision.”

LANZA.’

(Telegram.)

‘ROME, June 7, 1894.

‘*The Italian Embassy, Berlin.*

‘I thank you for information forwarded. As Your Excellency is aware, His Majesty’s government

<sup>1</sup> *Commendatore* Federico Weill is here alluded to, who was introduced to Crispi by the bankers A. Weill-Schott of Milan and became the bearer of the Premier’s message of encouragement to Berlin. This incident contributed towards placing *Commendatore* Weill in the position of Director-General of the new institute, an office he still fills.



would heartily welcome the foundation of a German bank in Italy, and trusts that the German bankers who appear inclined to participate in its foundation by contributing their capital may be convinced that the time has come when it will be to their own advantage to come to a final decision. CRISPI.'

'BERLIN, 9/6/1894.

'The head of the Bleichroeder Bank informed me last night by letter that, on the fifteenth of this month, delegates for the foundation of the Italo-German bank in question will be in Milan. They will proceed thence to Rome. He added that he hopes the bank may be established before the end of the present month. Report follows. LANZA.'

(Private.)

'BERLIN, 10 June, 1894.

'SIGNOR MINISTRO,—In amplification of my telegram of yesterday, I have the honour of herewith transmitting to Your Excellency a copy of the letter forwarded to me by Monsieur Schwabach, head of the Bleichroeder Bank, acquainting me with the decision arrived at by the group he represents. It has been determined that the delegates shall meet those of Austria-Hungary and Switzerland at Milan on the fifteenth of this month for the purpose of settling the most important questions, and that they shall proceed thence to Rome. He adds that he has every hope the matter may be speedily and satisfactorily settled. LANZA.'

(Enclosed.)

'BERLIN, 9 June, 1894.

'YOUR EXCELLENCY,—It was my intention to make the following communication to you in person, but the conference lasted until so late an

hour that I was unable to call upon Your Excellency afterwards. To-morrow, moreover, being Sunday, and as I am desirous of taking four-and-twenty hours of rest at my country place, my news would not reach you before a late hour on Monday. I am therefore taking the liberty of communicating with you by letter.

‘My friends derived much satisfaction from the information which Your Excellency had the goodness to impart to me, and they have consequently decided to send delegates to Italy. These gentlemen will meet their Austro-Hungarian and Swiss colleagues at Milan on the fifteenth of this present month, for the purpose of settling on the spot the most important points, such as who shall participate in the undertaking on the Italian side, and all matters concerning the staff.

‘As soon as an understanding has been reached as regards the formation of the group, all or some of the delegates will go on to Rome to open negotiations with the Minister, and I am therefore encouraged to hope that the foundation of the bank may be accomplished before the end of this month.

‘I leave it for Your Excellency to decide whether you will immediately impart this confidential information to His Excellency the President of the Crispi Ministry, and I beg you to accept, etc., etc., etc. (Signed) SCHWABACH.’

(From the French.)

‘BERLIN, 23 June, 1894.

‘I am in a position to inform you that Bleichroeders’ have paid in to the Imperial Bank, in the names of the founders of the *Banco Commerciale Italiano*, the sum of four million eight hundred and

sixty thousand Marks, which sum is at the disposal of the *Banco Sicilia*, Milan.

LANZA.'

Thus, with the sum of five millions, was founded the *Banco Commerciale Italiano* which institution to-day boasts a capital of one hundred and fifty millions and an enormous business connection throughout the Kingdom.

Intimately connected with this institution is the name of Crispi, who created favourable surroundings for it and fostered the seed from which it sprang.

# ITALY AND THE VATICAN

## CHAPTER VII

### AN ITALO-PORTUGUESE INCIDENT

His 'Most Faithful Majesty' to visit the Italian Sovereign in Rome—The official announcement of this visit—The Vatican's veto—Embarrassment and indecision of King Carlos and his Government—King Carlos appeals to Crispi—Severe comments of the Portuguese press—King Carlos asks to be received at Monza, but King Humbert refuses—The visit must be forgone—Crispi suspends diplomatic relations with Portugal—The Crispi-Vasconcellos conference—Opinions of different diplomatists concerning the conduct of the Portuguese Ministry—The remote origin of the downfall of monarchy in Portugal.

ON the first of October 1895, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Adamoli, made the following announcement to Crispi:—

'The Portuguese Minister to this Royal Court called at the *Consulta* to-day to announce to me officially that His Majesty the King of Portugal proposes coming to Rome to visit Our August Sovereign.

'Monsieur di Carvalho e Vasconcellos further informed me that His Majesty the King of Portugal will arrive in Rome some time between the fifteenth and twentieth of the present month of October, the exact date to be fixed later on.'

That same day Minister Carvalho e Vasconcellos himself left for Monza to make a similar announcement to the King.

Don Carlos, King of Portugal, the son of King Humbert's



sister, Maria Pia, was to set forth from Portugal on the morrow to pay his first visits since his accession to the throne, to the heads of friendly states. A communication from Lisbon, dated October 3, contained the following announcement:—

‘The King started yesterday at noon. He will be the guest of the Regent of Spain at San Sebastian to-day, and will arrive in Paris the day after to-morrow. The papers say that he will remain there about ten days, but I have reason to believe he will prolong his stay in France beyond that time. His Majesty will then pay his visit to our Royal Court, whence he will proceed to Berlin, bringing his journey to a close by a short stay in England. The exclusion of Austria-Hungary from the programme of this official tour has caused much comment, especially as that part of the Press which represents court circles, declares the journey to have been undertaken for the purpose of visiting the Sovereigns and Heads of the *friendly states*. As for Russia, the great distance that separates the two countries and the rare communications between them are sufficient to explain, more or less satisfactorily indeed, why the itinerary does not provide for a visit to the court of St. Petersburg.’

On the same day a telegram from di Cariati, the Italian *chargé d'affaires* at Lisbon, made the following announcement:

‘I have received information from a reliable source, and in strictest confidence, that the Nuncio is of opinion that the Holy See will suspend diplomatic relations with Portugal in consequence of the King’s visit to Rome, where, at all events, His Holiness will refuse to receive him.’

Another telegram from the same Minister, dated October 5, ran as follows:—

‘The Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom I have had a conference, confirmed the opinion that the King of Portugal’s visit to Rome would certainly be followed by the withdrawal of the Nuncio, which proceeding would be fraught with serious consequences for this country. He said that the Portuguese government was ready to do anything to gratify the King and the Italian government, but that it could not but regard with feelings of apprehension an incident which Italy herself must desire to avoid, because, instead of creating a favourable precedent, it would definitely preclude every ulterior possibility of visits from Sovereigns and Heads of States at Rome. The Italian government will find it to its own advantage to leave this question undiscussed, especially as, in the present case, the sentiments of affection that unite the two Courts and the friendly traditions that prevail between the two nations are a matter of general knowledge.’

An obstacle which had been carelessly overlooked thus suddenly appeared in the way of the Portuguese Monarch’s visit to Rome, which, although unsolicited, had been officially announced. Monsieur Pinto de Soveral, the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, sought to exculpate himself by throwing the responsibility of the decision upon his predecessor, who was now dead, but had been in office on the first of October when the visit was officially announced. On learning precisely what was going on at the Vatican, Crispi telegraphed as follows to General Ponzio Vaglia, the King’s first aide-de-camp, on October 7 :—

‘The Pope objects to King Carlos’ visit to Rome. The Pontifical Secretary of State has written to Lisbon protesting that, should his wishes be

disregarded, the Nuncio accredited to the Court of Portugal would be recalled.

‘Kindly inform His Majesty the King of this.’

Meanwhile King Carlos, who had reached Paris, had sent to beg King Humbert to extricate him from this embarrassing situation by consenting to receive him unofficially at Monza. Such an arrangement, however, was out of the question after the official announcement of a visit to Rome and the publicity which had been given to it. Informed of King Humbert’s refusal to comply with his royal nephew’s request, Crispi replied as follows :—

ROME, 9 October, 1895.

*To His Excellency Ponzio Vaglia, Monza.*

Our August Sovereign’s conduct could not have been other than what I expected of His Majesty. We do not need this insignificant King of Portugal, who counts not at all in the European concert. If he cannot come to Rome, then let him remain at home ; and as this act of recession on the part of King and Government reveals, moreover, the existence of principles which are contrary to our interests, we will reply by withdrawing our Minister from Lisbon.

Kindly present my devoted homage to His Majesty.

CRISPI.

Confronted on one hand by his uncle’s refusal to receive him elsewhere than at Rome, and on the other by the announcement from Lisbon that the Pope would consider his journey thither as a ‘personal insult,’ King Carlos, like the ‘Catholic and Faithful’ sovereign he was, finally decided to forgo the trip to Italy. The consequences of this determination, however, could not but cause him anxiety, and he sent to beg Crispi to take the most friendly view possible of his attitude, assuring him, through the Italian Ambassador at Paris, that his government would furnish ‘the most satisfactory explanations.’ To this communication Crispi replied as follows :—

15 October, 1895.

*To His Excellency Tornielli, Paris.*

The news contained in your telegram of yesterday was no secret: it was transmitted by telegraph to the Roman press at the same time.

I thank His Most Faithful Majesty for the communication with which he charged you, but I cannot deny that what has transpired is greatly to be deplored, and that it would not have happened had the Portuguese government carefully weighed the importance of the King's trip to Italy, and been capable of foreseeing its consequences.

After the discussions on this subject with which the Press of Europe has teemed for the last ten days, the explanation His Majesty has deigned to offer, while it testifies to his own delicacy of feeling and to his desire to avoid arousing unpleasant feeling in Italy, will not suffice to alter public opinion in this country.

Unfortunately, moreover, only last night a conversation was reported in the Roman press which took place in King Carlos' own Cabinet, and which places the Sovereign's explanation in a very dubious light.

As His Portuguese Majesty himself has said, an accumulation of circumstances, for none of which we, however, are responsible, has rendered the situation a most difficult one.

My deference for the person of King Carlos notwithstanding, my first thought must be for the state of public opinion in my own country, where the affront our national pride has suffered through this most deplorable incident cannot possibly pass unnoticed.

CRISPI.



The interview to which Crispi alluded had been granted by the Portuguese Minister at Paris and by King Carlos' private secretary to the correspondent of the Roman *Tribuna*, and both these gentlemen had declared that King Carlos would not visit Italy as had been announced, simply because he was unable to prolong his absence from Portugal. The Apostolic Nuncio at Lisbon, however, had already informed the Catholic press of that capital of the true reason of the Portuguese Sovereign's decision.

Meanwhile such was the agitation that prevailed throughout Portugal, that grave fears were entertained for the welfare of the dynasty. The Press, even that part of it which was most loyal to monarchical institutions, and the political circles of the Portuguese capital, were becoming daily more bitter in their censure. The *Jornal de Commercio*, that authoritative and widely read organ of the monarchical-progressive party, published a series of violent articles in its issues of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and eighteenth of October, from which we take the following extracts:—

‘. . . From the very beginning the political advisability of such a journey appeared doubtful to us, but we were far from foreseeing the incidents which have transpired and which are not only derogatory to the King, but a disgrace to the nation he represents.

‘Who was it who allowed the King of Portugal to set forth thus, all regardless of what might happen?

‘Who could it be but this unscrupulous Government . . .? Once having recommended the royal journey or consented to it, our Government was in duty bound to draw up such a programme for it as should be entirely satisfactory to the Governments of the countries the King proposed to visit.

‘This it omitted to do, and here we have the immediate result (to say nothing of what may still evolve), namely the choice between a quarrel with his own uncle, King Humbert, or with the Holy

Father, which situation may easily lead to a rupture of friendly relations, or at least to a fresh fiasco for Portugal, and this time the entire European press has laid the burden of responsibility upon the Crown itself.

‘ . . . The Government has not even the decency to attempt a defence of its actions ; nor has it spirit enough to assume its just part of responsibility.

‘ We had this day expected to receive some explanations concerning the shameful circumstances accompanying the royal journey, a journey which was acclaimed at the time it was announced, as promising inestimable advantages to the country. . . . The Government denies the very existence of the diplomatic incident with the Curia and the Quirinal in which it has entangled itself. It does not seek to excuse its own want of forethought, nor does it assume the slightest responsibility. On the contrary, all the responsibility is laid upon . . . whom ? Upon the King—the Sovereign himself !

‘ Do you doubt this ?

‘ Then open the *Diario de Noticias* and read :

“ Nothing has as yet been decided concerning His Majesty the King’s visit to Rome, as this journey will be planned by His Majesty himself. . . . ”

‘ What seems incredible is here plainly stated, and has all the savour of an official communication. As a matter of fact, the *Diario de Noticias* is well known to be the mouthpiece of the President of the Council.

‘ This short and apparently innocent paragraph contains, nevertheless, the following outrageous premise, viz. : *that the Government is not responsible for what is taking place, because the King it was, and not the Government, who planned this journey !*

‘The King planned it ?

‘Perhaps so ! The *Diario de Noticias* which says so, should surely know ; but in that case, it is to be regretted that the Monarch lacked the skill to develop his plans. His Majesty, however, cannot be made legally responsible, for the article of the *Charte* which declares him exempt from all responsibility, is one of those which the Dictature did not revoke. . . .’

‘ . . . The foreign Press is beginning to smile ironically, its sarcasm being directed mainly against the responsible advisers of the King of Portugal, who paved the way for this adventure ; but sarcasm is also already beginning to aim its bolts at the person of the Head of the Portuguese Nation himself, so that it may soon come to pass that Paris newsmongers will begin to enlarge upon that already oppressive legend concerning the *gaîté* of matters Portuguese !

‘But the Government heeds nothing of all this. . . . !

‘Disconcerted by the unexpected incident, and conscious of its grave error and overpowering responsibility, it remains inactive, as if, stunned by a sudden lightning flash, it had lost the faculty of appreciation, of thought, of deliberation, and of action.

‘It is in this state of paralysis, of syncope as it were, that the dictators meet in solemn council but to stare each other in the face, or automatically scratch their crowns, which act, however, fails to relieve the numbness of their brains.

‘And while the Ministers deliberate without deciding, the King, Don Carlos, remains in Paris in the enjoyment of a perpetual round of hunting parties, races, and theatres, as if the events which

are, in reality, so closely connected with his own person, were no concern of his; he occupying, meanwhile, a position so conspicuous as to attract the attention of the whole of Europe, a position, we feel, which is but ill-calculated to promote his own interests or those of his country.

‘It is therefore absolutely necessary that the Government should rouse itself and adopt measures for bringing to a speedy close an incident which it is indeed too late to suppress, but which it is certainly desirable to avoid aggravating and prolonging, for such a policy would be neither to the advantage of Portugal nor of her Sovereign. In fact, it would have quite the contrary effect.

‘The evil is done and the scandal has been made public. That, of course, is irreparable, and the King cannot go to Italy. . . .’

For some days, indeed, the Portuguese government remained in a state of indecision as to what course to pursue, or rather, being determined not to brave the wrath of the Vatican, it was at a loss to know what sort of ‘satisfactory explanations’ the King expected it to make to Crispi. On the seventeenth of October the Italian *chargé d'affaires* at Lisbon called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ascertain from him how much truth there was in the report which had appeared in several papers, that His Most Faithful Majesty had decided to forgo his journey to Italy. Monsieur de Soveral replied that ‘the idea of a visit to Rome had not yet been definitely abandoned,’ and declared that ‘the Portuguese government had not bound itself by any promise to the Holy See to relinquish this project.’ He expressed his deepest regret for the unfortunate complications to which the King’s journey had given rise, and declared this visit to be of ‘great political importance, especially as concerned Germany and England, with regard to the colonial questions which were still pending.’

It is interesting to note that, but a short time before, de Soveral had assured the representative of another great Power



that the King had undertaken this journey 'simply for his own pleasure'!

Two days later the journal *La Tarde*, the official organ of the Portuguese Cabinet, published an announcement of the following tenor:—

'It appears that the King will not go to Italy for the present, but will proceed to visit Germany and England.'

The *Diario de Noticias*, another government organ, repeated this announcement, with the addition of a telegram from its Paris correspondent to the following effect:—

'Paris, October 19.—It having proved impossible to prevail upon the Italian government to arrange for the reception of the King of Portugal elsewhere than in Rome, and in consequence of the attitude assumed by the Pope, His Majesty has decided to forgo his visit to Italy, and is leaving here for Germany. The Viscount de Pindella (Portuguese Minister at Berlin) has arrived, and will accompany the King to Berlin.'

This announcement was undoubtedly official, but meanwhile, no communication to this effect had been made to the Italian Legation. Minister de Soveral was so embarrassed that for some days he remained in seclusion at the Foreign Office, invisible not only to di Cariati, but to the representatives of the other Powers as well. The announcement that the visit to Rome would not take place was made simultaneously at Lisbon and at the *Consulta*, on October 21.

The Italian government had no desire to render the situation more serious. The Portuguese Court, so closely connected with the Italian Royal Family, must be treated with especial consideration, but the Government, nevertheless, was in duty bound to acquaint Europe and, above all, the Italian people with the exact facts concerning the rise and development of this unfortunate incident. And thus it came about that when, on October 21, Minister Carvalho addressed a note to our

Minister of Foreign Affairs announcing that King Carlos' visit had been indefinitely postponed 'owing to King Humbert's absence from Rome, and the necessity that King Carlos be at another Court on a fixed date,' Crispi was forced to expose the truth of the matter in a communication to the *Stefani*, and this in order to safeguard the dignity of the Italian government and relieve it of all responsibility. The communication further contained the announcement that the Italian *chargé d'affaires* at Lisbon had received orders to suspend diplomatic relations with the Portuguese government and to attend only to current affairs. One passage caused a great sensation. In it the hope was expressed that 'Portugal might one day recover her independence.'<sup>1</sup>

We read as follows in Crispi's Diary, under date of *October 21*, nine P.M. :—

'Carvalho e Vasconcellos has called upon me at my own house. Vasconcellos is an old acquaintance of mine. I met him at Lisbon in October 1858. After the exchange of the usual courtesies, he introduced the subject of King Carlos' journey. I replied as follows :—

"What has happened is greatly to be deplored. We have been friends since 1858, and it is as my friend that I now receive you, and not as the Minister to Italy of His Most Faithful Majesty.

"As your friend I wish to point out to you that your Government has acted with much levity. We did not ask for a visit from your Sovereign, and such a visit was uncalled for."

"That is true," he answered, "and it was I myself

<sup>1</sup> Diplomatic relations between Italy and Portugal were re-established in October 1896 by Minister Rudini on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Naples. Portugal gave us no satisfaction for the incident which had occurred during the preceding year, nor could she well do so, her Government still continuing to rely for support upon the clerical party. The causes for this suspension of relations were forgotten in the presence of an important event which concerned the future of the dynasty.

who came to make the official announcement to the Under Secretary of State Adamoli, on October first. I came here to see you also, but did not find you. I then went to Monza to announce the visit to His Majesty King Humbert."

"Precisely," I said, "Then, having once taken those steps, your Government should have carried the matter through, and not have succumbed before the threats of the Pope. You know well enough that the Vatican is perpetually warring against the Italian Monarchy, notwithstanding our correct and benevolent attitude towards itself. This is a matter which concerns the Italian home policy only, and you have given it an international character. We will let this pass, however. But the fact remains that you have openly preferred the Pope to the King of Italy; you have played into the hands of our enemy, who looks upon the postponement of King Carlos' visit as a victory for the Holy See. For the present we will go no further than to withdraw our Minister, but later on we shall decide what course to pursue."

"I appeal to your friendship," he said, "to adjust this misunderstanding. I do not ask this for myself, but for my unhappy country."

"I understand your anxiety," I replied, "but for the present I can do nothing. I repeat that, as the Minister of Portugal, I should not have received you. I have received and conversed with you as my friend, and this must not be looked upon as an official conference."

'After a short silence Vasconcellos rose, and we parted cordially.'

The rupture of diplomatic relations with Italy wounded the pride of the Portuguese people and dealt a heavy blow at the

prestige of both Government and Dynasty. The veto from the Vatican achieved its purpose of still further distracting a country whose internal conditions were already difficult. The Papacy, ruthlessly disregarding the evil it was causing, gave fresh proof of its baneful policy, which made every consideration subservient to its blind hostility to Italy. But not one Portuguese journal could complain of the Italian Government's decision. On the contrary, the Liberal press acknowledged its justice in language such as had never before been used. The following article, taken from the *Jornal de Commercio* of October 26, faithfully interpreted the sentiments of the great majority of the Portuguese people.

‘Has greater moral insensibility ever been?’

‘The Government of His Majesty the King of Italy, of a Sovereign who is neither more nor less than the brother of Her Majesty the Queen, Donna Maria Pia, suspends its intercourse with our Government.

‘And what is the attitude assumed by the Government of Portugal?’

‘It does nothing beyond inserting the following paragraph in the official journal, *La Tarde* :—

“‘The *Diario de Noticias*, alluding to this note, comments upon it in the following terms :

“‘. . . Judging, however, by the manner in which the Italian press itself treats the matter, we may conclude that this estrangement will be of short duration.”

“‘Our colleague’s information coincides precisely with our own.”

‘In plain language, the meaning of all this is the following :

“‘The Italian Government is in a temper? That need not alarm us! It will pass!”

‘Such is the satisfaction our Government sees fit



to vouchsafe King Humbert, the monarch most nearly related to the King, Don Carlos, for the discourtesy of its conduct towards him.

‘The truth is that the Portuguese government, according to its own declarations, had intended to treat the King of Italy with all courtesy and friendliness, but the ultimate result of all this intended courtesy and friendliness has been to gravely compromise the Italian Sovereign with regard to the Pope, and to draw attention to the fact that Rome is but the capital of Italy . . . *in partibus* !

‘After this brilliant achievement the Portuguese government, regardless of Italy’s just resentment, telegraphs to the King of Portugal to put his mind at rest ; that his august uncle’s displeasure is but the caprice of a boy who has failed to get his own way ; that he will get over this caprice, and that, meanwhile, His Majesty may go on amusing himself in order to divert his mind from the ills which afflict his country, and that he may not be unduly harassed by the news which reaches us from Africa and the Indies.

‘We say it in all conscience : such folly, such disregard of duty, such lack of consideration for the country and for the sacrifices it is called upon to make, cannot but lead to a grave crisis, for these are the symptoms of a state of dissolution of the governing powers, and already clearly foretell their downfall.

‘No ! Matters cannot go on thus. The country may be willing enough to pay, with its money and its blood, for the acts of folly of which its governors render themselves guilty, but it cannot tolerate that its honesty and prestige, its dignity and pride, be made to appear in the eyes of Europe, as quiescent

in the despicable manœuvrings in which its governors have engaged.

‘No! Public opinion protests, and the King must be made to understand that, although he himself may be willing to become the object of universal scorn which his own errors and those of his Ministers will make of him, the country—this monarchical country—refuses to be overwhelmed by the current of gubernatorial and diplomatic proceedings against which it openly protests; proceedings wherein injustice and violence, levity and an insatiable desire for amusement—which desire is hidden beneath a mantle of futile unconcern—have joined hands to dishonour and humble us.

‘We would not fail in the respect which is due the King, but it is absolutely necessary that he be made to understand that this state of things cannot continue. Every voice, without exception, proclaims this. Nobles and commoners, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, all are unanimous in recognising and regretting that the King and his Government do not satisfy the moral and political aspirations of the nation.

‘Exasperation is spreading throughout all classes; there are already signs of deep contempt, and unless the King can be made to sense the necessity for retracing his steps, by freeing himself from his iniquitous Government and by shaping his course on better and more substantial lines, the result will be fatal to him, and he, together with the glorious crown he has inherited, will be overwhelmed by the onward rush of public obloquy.

‘Last Monday the expedition under the command of the King’s own brother set out for India, and the painful news which reaches us from Goa is but ill

calculated to hearten us concerning the final and happy result of this struggle, and to console us for the sufferings to which our troops are exposed.

‘Would not this have been a favourable moment for the King’s immediate return to Portugal, by means of which step the Italian incident might have been brought to a timely and decorous conclusion?’

‘Everything pointed to the advisability of this step, but the King and his Government—one more blind than the other—failed to see it, and on the eve of that memorable and sorrowful day His Majesty found nothing better to do than to seek diversion from his sacred duties as head of the State, at the *Théâtre de la Gaîté*, and to recall the story of our Indian struggle—while listening to the *couplets* of *Les Vingt-Huit Jours de Clairette*!

‘Let men and officers be torn from their families and sacrifice life itself to their country; let the rate-payer sweat blood that the demands of the nation may be satisfied. . . .

‘Far removed from all this suffering, the King of Portugal stands triumphant, violating his oath of office, trampling the laws under foot, and with no apparent preoccupation save that of procuring for himself a merry and untroubled existence.

‘Although we may be loth to admit them, there are two points concerning which there can be but one opinion, viz., the absolute truthfulness of the sketch we have given here, and the necessity for proclaiming loudly and clearly what all acknowledge in their hearts.

‘We seek no favours from the Crown. On the contrary, being moved only by an impelling sense of our civic duty, we willingly undertake the ungrateful task of speaking the truth to the King, and this

mission we shall faithfully fulfil, undeterred either by hatred or by fear.

‘We are Monarchists and Liberal-Conservatives, and we know that herein our duty lies!’

The manner in which the Italian government brought this incident to a close met with almost universal approval throughout Europe (the Clerical press, of course, excepted), and the events which had transpired perceptibly cooled the reception which King Carlos received in Germany and England.

The Ambassador, Count Lanza, wrote from Berlin on the twentieth and again on the thirty-first of October:—

‘. . . In the very beginning Baron von Marschall expressed to me his contempt for the incapacity and weakness of the Lisbon Cabinet, which incapacity and weakness, indeed, are matters of common knowledge. His Most Faithful Majesty will arrive here on November first. He asked to be allowed to come one week earlier, but His Majesty the Emperor replied that he could not receive him before that date, which had been previously fixed. As yet there is no talk of court festivities, and His Majesty will not stand on any great ceremony with King Carlos, who will be here but a few days, especially after the incident in connection with his journey to Rome. . . .’

‘Almost as if wishing to apologise for the reception the King of Portugal has received, the Secretary of State informed me privately yesterday that, owing to the incident in connection with the visit to Rome, the festivities to be held here will be restricted to those rendered indispensable by etiquette. There will be no official reception in Berlin, but only at the *Neues Palais* at Potsdam, where the King of Portugal is lodged. On Saturday there is to be a dinner at Potsdam, but no invitations



have been issued to the diplomatic corps. On Sunday their Majesties will attend the Opera, but the performance will not be *de gala*, but only à *théâtre paré*. The papers make but casual mention of the King of Portugal's arrival.'

The Emperor ordered that the opera *Rienzi* be given, and enjoyed the opportunity of showing his guest Rome upon the stage.

The following report, forwarded by the Ambassador Ferrero, shows that England was no less alive to the evil this incident had wrought :—

'Salisbury, who is visibly preoccupied by what might happen in Portugal should some question in the Italian Parliament concerning the famous incident give rise to heated discussion, has earnestly requested me to beg His Majesty's government to avoid, if possible, any such question in the Chamber. He actually fears that the reaction in the Portuguese House might be such as to lead to the overthrow of the Dynasty.'

The abject subordination of the State to clerical influences, which brought about the incident we have so minutely described, contributed largely towards the downfall of the Portuguese Monarchy, after the appalling tragedy in which the Royal Family was involved. It is but just to remember that the causes for popular dissatisfaction were of remote origin, and that this dissatisfaction had continued to spread. When it reached the army, the fate of the monarchical regime was sealed.

As early as December 1889, Crispi had received the following communication from Berlin :—

'Fortunately there is no General in Portugal, as there was in Brazil, who is sufficiently popular to be able to place himself at the head of an uprising such

as that which overthrew Don Pedro II., by a *coup de main* which assumed the proportions of a veritable *cscamotage*. Were it not for this circumstance, at the first attempt at such a proceeding in Lisbon the Dynasty would collapse like a house of cards. A popular revolution in Portugal is no more improbable than it was at Rio de Janeiro. The army is doubtless animated, on the whole, by a sense of duty and respect for discipline, but only when led by a chief possessing its full confidence. As for that, however, the revolution, or rather evolution, which has recently been achieved in Brazil proves that fomenters of dissatisfaction do not need the collaboration of the masses if they have at their service generals such as those who led the Brazilian uprising. It is therefore of vital importance that the King should acquire the regard of the army, should surround himself with officers whose loyalty is beyond suspicion, and, above all, that he should be able to rely implicitly upon the military commandant of Lisbon. . . .

‘Should the republican movement triumph in Portugal as it did in Brazil, and as it probably would eventually in Spain as well, this event would be a serious blow to the monarchical principle in Europe, and would be to the advantage of the republican institutions of France, which country would naturally be on the lookout for allies against Germany and Italy.’

Crispi had not omitted to advise the Portuguese government, and he had also made a successful appeal to England with regard to a friendly conclusion of the conflict which had arisen concerning the Anglo-Portuguese colonies in West Africa. In a letter written—be it observed—on January 11, 1891, the Italian Minister at Lisbon said to Crispi:—

‘On my return I was received in private audience by His Majesty the King, who expressed his appreciation of the valuable services Your Excellency rendered to Portugal during her misunderstanding with England.

‘The Minister of Foreign Affairs charged me to thank Your Excellency for the friendly and constant support which His Majesty’s government afforded the Portuguese government at that trying time.

‘I seized this opportunity for carrying out the instructions imparted to me by Your Excellency in person, and explained to Monsieur Du Bocage how unfavourable was the impression produced by the excessively lenient attitude of the Portuguese government towards the republican party, in view of the evil which might result from it, and especially of the relaxation of discipline in the army which would be its unavoidable consequence.

‘The Minister assured me that internal conditions are greatly improved in Portugal; that the Cabinet is doing its utmost to maintain order, and that the republican party is to be feared only in case fresh pressure be brought to bear by England, which would cause great dissatisfaction throughout the country. The republican party would then, of course, “work” the country for its own ends. As for the reports concerning the sentiments prevailing in the army, these, he said, were greatly exaggerated.

‘I must not conceal from Your Excellency that my observations failed to produce any great impression on Monsieur Du Bocage, who received them as testifying to the interest His Majesty’s government takes in Portugal, but I concluded that he is not really alive to the dangers of a similar state of affairs. Such is the laxity that prevails

throughout the governing hierarchy and determines political dealings in this country, that a change can hardly be hoped for, and my colleague in Spain who, by order of his Government, entered a similar protest, is of the same opinion.

‘The King appeared to be more deeply impressed, and remarked, justly enough perhaps, that it had now become a matter of great difficulty to restrain officers, who had heretofore enjoyed the greatest liberty of speech and action.

‘Meanwhile, despite the fact that public opinion has become less violent, and that the factions have apparently ceased to contend, the republican party is still carrying on its propaganda.

‘A republican congress was recently held at Lisbon. It enjoyed perfect freedom in every way, and resulted in the nomination of a new Directory, which numbers among its members two Major-Generals, Latino Coelho and Souza Brandao, who are still in active service, although not actually in command of troops.

‘Another alarming symptom with regard to the discipline of the army, is the fact that many officers have joined the Liberal League, founded, under cover of a patriotic association, by Monsieur Fuschini, a member of Parliament belonging to the group known as the *Dynastical Left*. The association may not be republican in character, but this participation on the part of officers in political demonstrations is certainly not consistent with the maintenance of military discipline.

‘In reporting on the present condition of Portugal, I wish to repeat what I have already stated in the course of my correspondence concerning it, namely, that the gravity of the situation is attenuated by the



habits and character of this people, which circumstance will, in all probability, delay the course of events which elsewhere would be the immediate consequence of the dangers I have enumerated as threatening existing institutions.

‘The resolving of the question at issue between Portugal and Great Britain will greatly strengthen the present order of things, and will rob the republican party of its most powerful instrument of propaganda for rousing the country.’

The grounds for dissatisfaction which Portugal had, were so numerous, indeed, that, fostered by the weakness of the Government, republican propaganda could not fail to bear the fruit it did.

# EUROPE AND THE EASTERN QUESTION

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BALKAN QUESTION

In 1879 Crispi expresses his faith in the possibility of reorganising the Balkan Peninsula on a basis of nationalities—His criticism of the Berlin Treaty with regard to the Balkan Peninsula—Three unpublished interviews between Crispi and Prince Bismarck—The second phase of the Bulgarian Question, and the Triple Alliance between Italy, England, and Austria—Turkey declares to Prince Ferdinand that his sojourn in Bulgaria is illegal—Failure of the Russian policy—Stambuloff thanks Crispi in the name of the Bulgarian people — The Russo-Bulgarian reconciliation — Two addresses to Crispi forwarded by the *Eastern Confederation*—The Cretan Question and Turkish misgovernment—Crispi and Albania—Crispi finds a bride for the future king of Italy in Montenegro—The Balkan Confederacy, with Constantinople as capital—‘ Let the Sultan withdraw into Asia !’

CRISPI's views concerning the intricate problem of the East of Europe never altered. That he was fully alive to the rights of the Balkan peoples and the demands of civilisation, and that politically his views stood for the essential interests of Europe in general, has now been demonstrated by the war for freedom which the four States undertook against Turkey at the close of the year 1912—a struggle that was inevitable, and infinitely to be preferred to any solution of the problem the Great Powers might have excogitated and imposed. The clean cut of the sword alone can disentangle such matted skeins and achieve ultimate redemption. And this time, indeed, the sword has rendered a valuable service to diplomacy, by emancipating it from the hypocritical and humiliating policy which sustained

for so many decades, a regime that richly deserved the contempt with which it was regarded.

To come down to times nearest our own, we may mention that, on the occasion of the discussion concerning the foreign policy which took place at the Chamber in February 1879, Crispi said, in speaking of the Oriental Question :—

‘I myself, gentlemen, am convinced that the Balkan Peninsula can be reorganised on a basis of nationality. I am firmly persuaded that the breath of liberty alone will be able to vivify, civilise, and place those nations upon the great highway along which the other nations of Europe have been travelling for centuries.

‘Think of Bulgaria, gentlemen! For how many acts of heroism has it not been the stage! Have you forgotten Gladstone’s book, *Bulgarian Horrors*, wherein we are told how the trees were made to serve as gibbets for those who had rebelled in the name of country and religion?

‘How can any one maintain that these people are satisfied with Turkish domination when they have been struggling against it for centuries?

‘Can we forget the heroism of that strong race which peoples Montenegro, and which, by miracles of bravery, held foreign invasion so long at bay, while so many other races succumbed to brute force?

‘Do you not see, gentlemen, that such acts of courage, such virtues and such strength of purpose, are the irrefragable proofs of that vitality which is the true sign of the life of nations?

‘How can a nation be expected to assert itself during a struggle with the superior forces that oppress it, or even after that struggle, in the presence of the headsman? Were there not similar examples

in our own country in 1820 and again in 1860? And if we compare what was accomplished by Italy during the years of her long bondage with what the oppressed peoples of the Balkan Peninsula have achieved since the beginning of the century, shall we have the courage, we a nation formed but yesterday, to refuse our applause to such heroism and virtue? (*Hear! Hear!* from the Left.)

‘The necessary elements for the reorganisation of the Balkan Peninsula on the basis of nationality do actually exist, and we may trust to time to develop them and bring them to fruition.’

Crispi was but ill satisfied with the Berlin Treaty of 1878, which

‘. . . dismembered Roumania, betrayed Greece, and destroyed the union of the revolutionary forces which, as early as June 1875, had struck a blow for the redemption of the Slavonic race. In 1878, as in 1875, the rights of nations were disregarded. What was desired and established at the German capital had already been voiced in the English Parliament. Lord Beaconsfield, that incarnation of the British spirit, declared to the House of Lords that the united Powers felt it incumbent upon them to further maintain the Ottoman domination. But even this is not final, being, after all, but a temporary arrangement, and as Lord Salisbury said in the circular attached to the Treaty, all will depend upon the Sultan’s Ministers, whether they will be capable of profiting by the present arrangement, or whether they will waste what is probably the last chance Turkey will be offered.

‘All foresee that Turkey will not adopt the wiser course, and that, sooner or later, she will again be



shaken by fresh convulsions, which will reduce her to utter ruin. Meanwhile England has seized Cyprus, Russia has once more obtained possession of Bessarabia, and Austria will occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. These are three important stations from a strategical point of view, whose occupation not only implies the mistrust that prevails between the Cabinets of London, Petersburg, and Vienna, but an enforced agreement as well, to the effect that nothing shall be done in the East without the consent of those Cabinets. It is clear that those Powers are masters of the situation, and upon the circumspection of the three governments will depend the fortunes of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula.'

On another occasion Crispi said :—

'The year 1878 gave Europe a respite indeed, but not definite peace. The national problem in the East is still unsolved. It has been said : Russia as far as the Adriatic, or Austria as far as the Ægean. I cannot accept either alternative. Italy must remain on friendly terms with Austria and with Russia as well, but we should never wish to see either country overstep its boundaries. At Berlin, Austria obtained Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provinces afford her an invulnerable frontier on the East,<sup>1</sup> and with this she must be satisfied.'

Throughout his Ministry Crispi remained faithful to his programme. By tempering Prince Bismarck's enthusiasm for Russia he obstructed the attempts of that country to render

<sup>1</sup> This appreciation of the value of the two provinces was also given in the official organ of the Austro-Hungarian Chancery, the *Fremdenblatt* : 'When Bosnia and Herzegovina shall have become the bulwark of Austria, Servia and Montenegro will no longer be able to molest us.'

her influence preponderant in Bulgaria and Roumania, and he moreover succeeded in binding Austria to guarantee the *status quo* in the Balkans. This policy has maintained peace and given the people of the Balkan States time to prepare their forces, and bring to a victorious finish the great match they have been playing for centuries with Turkey. To-day Russia may no longer aspire to supremacy in the Balkan States, who come forth from the present war emancipated, nor can she hope to establish her rule at Constantinople, while Austria may no longer entertain any reasonable hope of expansion towards the East. What Crispi foretold in 1879 has come to pass: the people of the Balkans, having taken up their line of march along the great highway of civilisation and progress, now form an invulnerable bulwark against Russian and Austrian ambitions.

What Crispi thought of the policy of Russia in the Orient, and what measures he adopted for obstructing it, is revealed in his interviews with Prince Bismarck and by the documents concerning the Bulgarian and Roumanian questions which we have given in a preceding volume.<sup>1</sup>

We here transcribe from Crispi's Diary, three conversations which took place between the Grand Chancellor and himself in May 1889. As is well known, King Humbert, accompanied by his Prime Minister, went to Berlin at that time, to return the visit Emperor William had paid him a year earlier.

*May 22.*—At 4.45 P.M. I went to see Prince Bismarck. I found the King in the drawing-room conversing with Princess Bismarck. After five minutes or so the King took his departure, saying: 'I leave you with Signor Crispi.' The Prince immediately resumed a conversation we had begun on a previous occasion, concerning Russia and her plans in the Balkan Peninsula.

BISMARCK.—We must not seek to prevent Russia from going to Constantinople. Situated as she is to-day, it is impossible to attack her. On the

<sup>1</sup> *Crispi Memoirs*, vol. ii.

Bosporus she would be weaker and might easily be overpowered.

CRISPI.—But Roumania and Bulgaria would become her prey. It is plain that with a Sultan favourably inclined towards Russia, the undertaking would not be over difficult; but Europe would suffer by it.

BISMARCK.—If Russia be left free to act, France will eventually be weaned from her, and a great war thus avoided. On the other hand, if Russia be not allowed to advance, she may penetrate into Galicia and we should then have a general crisis.

CRISPI.—How strong are the Russian forces on the frontier?

BISMARCK.—There are two hundred thousand men along our frontiers, three hundred thousand along the Austrian boundary, and none on the Roumanian side. Do you ever shoot? Then you know that you have to wait until your quarry comes out into the open before firing. Do not be in a hurry. Let matters take their course. Russia wants to go to Constantinople, and she must be suffered to do so. As for the Sultan, we need not trouble ourselves about him. Leave him to his fate. The Russians once established at Constantinople, the Sultan will accept their protectorate. If they leave him his harem he will be quite satisfied.

CRISPI.—This would be greatly to the disadvantage of the smaller states along the Danube, which would be absorbed.

BISMARCK.—No, Russia would not touch them. Her one aim is to maintain orthodox princes.

CRISPI.—It would appear that things already point that way in Roumania, for Prince Charles'

power is shaken, and the party in favour of Russia has manifested the desire to place one of the ancient *Hospodars* on the throne.

BISMARCK.—The Roumanians go still further. They would gladly destroy their union and re-establish the two small states, with Jassy and Bucharest as capitals.

While the Prince was speaking the clock struck half-past five, and I rose, begging to be allowed to resume the discussion on the morrow. As there was to be a state dinner at court at six o'clock, I was obliged to take my departure.

May 23.—I reached Prince Bismarck's palace at 2.30 P.M. I found him in one of the drawing-rooms on the ground floor. I apologised for arriving half an hour late, but the Prince assured me it did not matter, as he was to remain at home all day.

We immediately entered into conversation, and resumed our discussion at the point at which it had been interrupted.

CRISPI.—Well, Your Highness told me nothing yesterday that I did not know before. You have said the same things to me on previous occasions. Now I should like to know if you have ever exposed these matters to Lord Salisbury?

BISMARCK.—No, but I have discussed them with the Emperor of Austria.

CRISPI.—And what did he say to your opinions?

BISMARCK.—The Emperor believes that Russia should not be allowed to pass, and that she should be prevented from going to Constantinople. The Emperor fears the displeasure of Hungary, which country does not wish to see Russia established on the Bosphorus. But he is wrong! Russia on the Bosphorus would gradually become weaker, and



would end eventually as all the other powers have ended who have held sway there.

CRISPI.—But the Roman Empire held sway there for many centuries, and the Turk has also long been established there, and although he may be weak, no one has as yet been able to overthrow him.

BISMARCK.—They have not wished to overthrow him, because Europe has always been opposed to the advance of the Russians. This time Russia will not go to Constantinople by land. This will be a naval expedition.

CRISPI.—Do you believe that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea is strong?

BISMARCK.—It is improving, and in the course of a couple of years Russia will have doubled the number of her vessels. Even at the present moment she might easily collect thirty or forty thousand men and rush them into Roumelia. She must be allowed to act, and England must be placed in such a position as to oblige her to join in the struggle.

CRISPI.—You cannot have forgotten that we have agreed with England not to permit any modification of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and Ægean.

BISMARCK.—That is not enough. England might easily find a way of avoiding the fulfilment of her promises. She must be compromised, and thus there will be four of us when once we have got England to join.

CRISPI.—Do you think France will soon go to war?

BISMARCK.—I do not think so. She is not ready. Her powder does not keep six months.

CRISPI.—But England also needs time. It will take three or four years to complete her fleet.

BISMARCK.—Two years will suffice. But were she with us to-day our united forces would suffice to withstand the French fleet.

CRISPI.—Do you know a certain Monsieur Tachard?

BISMARCK.—I do. He once spent several days with me. The ladies of my household called him Monsieur *Crachard*, because he was always spitting, even on the carpets!

CRISPI.—What do you think of his plan for converting Alsace and Lorraine into a neutral state enjoying autonomy?

BISMARCK.—To whom does he expect to give this state?

CRISPI.—To one of your princes, perhaps.

BISMARCK.—The time for neutral states is past. You can see that in the case in Switzerland, where they arrest my agents. The state, like the individual, must be responsible for its actions.

CRISPI.—One cause of war would be removed if Alsace-Lorraine became neutral. What do they say to the idea in France?

BISMARCK. — The French government might agree to it. But not even this would suffice to ward off war. We should no longer be able to threaten France by land, while France would be free to attack us by sea.

CRISPI.—Do you trust the Austrian government?

BISMARCK.—I trust the Emperor, but certainly not Count Taaffe.

CRISPI.—Taaffe is no more friendly to you than he is to me.

BISMARCK.—We must also bear in mind that in

Austria there is a strong current in favour of France, and every effort is made to detach her from Germany and Italy.

CRISPI.—As long as she sticks to you, Austria will continue to exist. The Emperor clings to our alliance because he has the existence of the Empire at heart. The Czar would welcome the detachment of Austria; he would demand nothing but that we remain neutral, and the downfall of Austria would be the result. Her position is unlike our own. Italy and Germany subsist by their own strength, because they are cemented by nationality.

BISMARCK.—I see that. But Austria as she is, is necessary for the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe, and she must be supported.

CRISPI.—I am entirely of your opinion, and I have always sought to support her.

BISMARCK.—In 1866 I would not annihilate her, and to-day we must stand by her.

CRISPI.—That is so; but her Government must not interfere with our affairs.

BISMARCK.—The Emperor himself understands that, and there is nothing to fear from him.

CRISPI.—Taaffe is too Catholic, and should he begin intriguing with France he might cause us great discomfort. During the last days of his term of office Goblet attempted to revive the September Convention.

BISMARCK.—Goblet is certainly not clever, but it seems impossible that he should have acted thus. To demand the revival of the September Convention would be the same as to occupy a portion of Italy with an army. It would mean war, and France could not commit such an error.

*May 25.*—Prince Bismarck came to call upon me

at 5.30 P.M. The conversation turned upon the topic of the day, namely the King's return to Italy, and a discussion of the best route.

BISMARCK.—As you probably know, everything has been arranged. The Emperor of his own free will gave up the trip to Strassburg, merely expressing the hope that you would remain until to-morrow, Sunday, which I believe His Majesty the King gladly consented to do.

CRISPI.—I have you to thank for this arrangement. I must get back to Rome without delay, however. Parliament is in session, and there is still much work to be done.

BISMARCK.—To-morrow being Sunday, do you think the King will want a priest?

CRISPI.—That rests entirely with His Majesty. I have nothing to do with matters of religion. When we are travelling in Italy there is always a chapel in the Royal Palace, and both the King and Queen attend Mass. In Rome the King receives me on Sundays between ten and twelve o'clock for the signing of decrees and laws, and that is all I know about it.

BISMARCK.—Are you still at loggerheads with the Turk?

CRISPI.—He is a very beast! He does not know what he is about.

BISMARCK.—That is true enough, but wild beasts must be tamed and not thrashed!

CRISPI.—And his governors are as bad as himself. . . .

BISMARCK.—No, much worse. But you must not let that worry you. Will you yourself be any the stronger for beating a dog?

CRISPI.—I believe those governors are encouraged



to act as they do, for I always find them insolent and ever ready to stir up trouble without the slightest reason. They kept the Hodeida affair dangling for more than two years. We had agreed that the governor would make reparation for the affront my consul had suffered. One fine day I receive notice from Constantinople that the matter is ended, and that reparation has been made. Hereupon, in order to avoid fresh trouble between the governor and the consul, I recalled this latter. What a surprise awaited me! I had been deceived. What the Porte had alleged was a lie. Later on, in January of that same year, a band of Turkish artillerymen broke open the tomb of an Italian citizen and mishandled the corpse. We protested, and the reply was that the local authorities were awaiting instructions from the central government. We demanded that these instructions be applied for by telegraph, and were informed that the wires were down. This was another lie. Hereupon I ordered General Baldiserra to despatch his ships. I could not allow Italy to be treated thus in the Red Sea. Turkey's madness may be overlooked elsewhere, but not in the Red Sea.

BISMARCK.—Shall you go to Africa?

CRISPI.—Unfortunately, Your Highness, we are there already. The thing now is to discover how to remain there comfortably. In Asmara, in the Bogos country and elsewhere, there is land to cultivate, and we may also obtain a naturally strong frontier line.

BISMARCK.—The English, nevertheless, after conquering Abyssinia, abandoned it. If it had been possible to colonise it they would have remained.

CRISPI.—The English were satisfied with placing

the seal of their power upon the country, and that was the sole purpose of their expedition. We, Italy and Germany, came late. We found the regions best suited to cultivation in Africa, Asia, and America already occupied, and there is not much left for us to do.

BISMARCK. — Will you purchase the German possessions ?

CRISPI. — Your Highness, I am quite prepared to sell you the Italian possessions !

If Bulgaria has been able to develop her resources and reduce them to order under the wise government of Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, no small part of merit is due to Crispi, who, from the day of that prince's election, successfully maintained the *non intervenio* in the councils of Europe, thus manifesting his respect for the principle of nationalism. In the beginning England did not concern herself with the result of the election voted by the Bulgarian people at Tirnovo, and offered no opposition to the Russian demand that the Sultan refuse to confirm it, as was his right by virtue of the Berlin Treaty, in the absence of the unanimous consent of the Great Powers. Later on she changed her attitude and supported the Italian proposal that the will of the Bulgarian people be respected.

Without reproducing here documents which have already been made public, it will be well, nevertheless, to transcribe a few passages from despatches of that time, which will convey a correct impression of Crispi's opinions.

*Crispi to the King* (16 August, 1887).

‘ . . . I may add that Italy, if she is to remain faithful to her traditions, her principles, and her interests, must seek to aid Bulgaria and all the other Balkan States as well, in gaining their independence.’

*Crispi to the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople* (18 August).

‘ We have two important ends in view : the one

is immediate, namely the maintenance of peace; the other, ultimate and farther removed, is the definite adjustment, upon a solid and rational basis, of those Christian peoples of Europe who have not yet been formed into nations, although possessed of all the ethical and moral attributes of which nationalism is composed.'

*Crispi to the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople (August 31).*

'The Bulgarians, under a Prince of their own choosing, who, in spite of the errors he may have committed, is nevertheless supported by a strong party, are on the point of organising a government. The best policy will be not to hinder them in their efforts. An attempt at intervention or, worse still, any meddlesome act, would expose Europe to the necessity of either confessing her own incapacity to bring the crisis to a satisfactory close, or, should violent measures be resorted to, of herself provoking that conflict which all are seeking to avoid.'

The matter was not settled in 1887, but at the close of that year the Italo-Anglo-Austrian *entente* was an accomplished fact and was already exerting a powerful influence at Constantinople. What took place afterwards between irate Russia, inexorable in her aversion to Prince Ferdinand, and the three Powers who were determined to frustrate her plans, was but a juggling match from which Russia derived no advantage.

The Russian government, not wishing to confess the true reason for its attitude, complained of supposititious intrigues between the heads of the Government at Sofia and the nihilists. Monsieur Stambuloff himself, president of the Bulgarian Cabinet, was accused of having been expelled from the seminary at Odessa on account of his ultra-socialistic principles, and it was furthermore alleged that a correspondence had been discovered between a member of that same Cabinet and a naval officer who was implicated in a conspiracy for assass-

inating the Czar. Such accusations were regarded as seriously endangering the peace of Europe, the spectre of nihilism being paraded for the purpose of maintaining the Czar in a state of anxiety, and thus inducing him to resort to extreme measures.

The legal position which Russia had assumed was as follows : Turkey, having been invited to act, hesitated for two reasons— (1) because the Powers were not unanimous in their recognition ; (2) because she was equally uneasy as to what would happen in Bulgaria should the Prince of Coburg obey the injunction to withdraw, or see fit to disregard it.

The Russian Chancellor would not admit the possibility of a divergence of opinion among the Powers on the first point. The Prince had violated the Berlin Treaty by assuming office before the ratification of his election. No one of the Powers denying this, it became the duty of all, even if every other consideration be ignored, to re-establish juridical order and display their solidarity at Constantinople.

As regards the second ground for hesitation on the part of the Sultan, Chancellor Giers confined himself to protesting that Russia's intentions were all of a peaceful nature ; the Czar did not wish to force the Sultan to take up arms, nor did he himself desire to do so. The declaration which the Sultan was requested to make to Sofia would be a pacific means of retrenching from the question those elements which menaced the Balkan Peninsula and the peace of Europe.

The reply which the Petersburg Chancery made to the second question is obviously evasive.

On the seventeenth and again on the nineteenth of February, 1888, the Russian Ambassador, Monsieur Uxkull, conferred with Crispi on this subject. In Crispi's Diary we read :—

. . . He came, by order of his Government, to request that the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople should collaborate with the Russian Ambassador at that place in persuading the Sultan to declare to Prince Ferdinand that his sojourn in Bulgaria was illegal. I replied that although Italy may acknowledge the legality of Prince Ferdinand's



election, she nevertheless considers his presence upon the Bulgarian throne illegal. I added that as for the demand of Russia, I failed to comprehend its purpose. I asked for time to reflect, and we arranged to meet again on Sunday, February 19.

UXKULL came to get the answer I had promised him at our last interview.

CRISPI.—I repeated that we acknowledge the legality of Prince Ferdinand's election, but that we consider his presence in Bulgaria illegal. I have already expressed this view to Turkey, by a verbal statement to Photiades Pacha, as well as by a note which I despatched as early as August 17, 1887, to Baron Blanc, who communicated its contents to the Porte. It seems to me useless and idle to again repeat this opinion, and I fail to comprehend what end Russia can have in view.

UXKULL.—We make this request because, unless the assent of all the Powers be obtained, the Porte will never make the declaration.

CRISPI.—And when the Porte shall have made this declaration, what result do you expect to obtain? Before deciding, I must know the nature of Russia's ultimate intentions. As you are well aware, we are opposed to any military action in Bulgaria.

UXKULL.—We have no intention of taking up arms against Prince Ferdinand.

CRISPI.—Very well. In that case any action on my part at Constantinople would be entirely superfluous. I must certainly reserve my decision until I know what your real intentions are. Why not convoke a Conference? That would be the one way of settling this difficulty.

UXKULL.—Conferences seldom succeed unless there has been a preliminary agreement.

CRISPI.—That is true enough, but, after all, I see no better way.

‘LONDON, 18 February, 1888.

‘The Russian Ambassador has this day made a verbal statement to Lord Salisbury similar to the one made to Your Excellency. Salisbury replied that he would consider the Russian demand, but that he must be allowed to reserve his answer. He has always felt that Prince Ferdinand’s removal would be followed by serious consequences and give rise to much trouble in Bulgaria. It would furthermore be desirable to know whom Russia proposes to put in the Prince’s place.

CATALANI.’

‘LONDON, 19 February, 1888.

‘I have communicated the contents of Your Excellency’s last telegram to Lord Salisbury. His Lordship replied as follows: “I am waiting to ascertain what opinions are entertained by Crispi and Kálnoky, whom I have this day consulted, but I am inclined to let Russia understand that the English government cannot answer her proposal without knowing what the Petersburg Cabinet anticipates proposing in case, as a result of the action of the Powers, Prince Ferdinand be set aside, and Bulgaria be left without a government.”

CATALANI.’

To the Russian communication made to him by the Ambassador, Prince Lobanow, Count Kálnoky returned a preliminary answer similar to that of Crispi and Salisbury, enlarging upon it later on by means of a Note. In this Note the Imperial and Royal Cabinet, after expressing its hearty approval of the spirit of accommodation which had inspired the desire expressed by the Russian government that a peaceful solution to the Bulgarian problem be sought, which, resting alike upon the authority of justice and the natural course of

events, should exclude all armed intervention, demanded that the Powers come to an understanding on the following points :

1. In case Prince Ferdinand should leave the country, what form of provisional government and what regency would be recognised and declared legal pending the election of a prince ?
2. In case Prince Ferdinand and his Government should resist, or proclaim the independence of Bulgaria, what measures should be adopted to avert the serious menace to Turkey and the cause of peace in the Orient that would result ? Armed intervention being excluded, in what manner could the Powers, having exposed themselves to a challenge from Bulgaria, assert their authority ?

Monsieur Giers' reply to the Austrian objections, which Baron Uxkull reported to Crispi, ran as follows :—

‘As regards the first question: the Russian government is convinced that a categorical declaration made by the Porte, and supported by the representatives of the Powers at Sofia, would end by inducing Prince Ferdinand to withdraw. Should he decline to do so, Russia, holding herself free as to her line of action, would seek to conclude an agreement with the Powers concerning further measures.

‘As regards the second question: the Russian government declares that it has no intention of placing the provisional government in the hands of its own partisans, and that it will regulate its attitude according to the disposition the provisional government may display towards Russia.’

Crispi enlarged upon his first reply by means of the following Note :

‘ The Minister of Foreign Affairs had the honour to inform His Excellency the Russian Ambassador, on the seventeenth and again on the nineteenth of this present month, that His Majesty’s government had declared through the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople, as early as last August, that, in its opinion, by taking possession of the Bulgarian throne, Prince Ferdinand had violated the prescriptions of the Berlin Treaty, this Prince’s election having neither been previously ratified by the Porte nor recognised by the Powers.

‘ These premises established, it becomes necessary to inquire whether, after this occupation has been declared illegal, the Prince’s removal may be accomplished without military action, and whether a new government, being a free manifestation of the will of the people, may be easily established in Bulgaria.

‘ Of the two hypotheses, the one which assumes that Prince Ferdinand’s departure—enjoined either by moral or material pressure, as the case may be—would provoke disturbances, appears to us far more probable than that other which assumes a peaceful solution of the problem. His Majesty’s government therefore, being justly concerned as to what may transpire, does not feel justified in lending its support to a step directed against a state of things which, although it may be illegal, has nevertheless so far provided the Principality with an administration which is comparatively well organised.

‘ Be this as it may, however, His Majesty’s government is deeply gratified by the assurance that the Imperial government intends to abstain



from the use of coercive measures against the Bulgarians, and that his Majesty the Emperor is anxious to see the difficulty peacefully resolved.'

Some days later the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople made the following communication to the Porte, by order of his Government :—

(From the French.)

'The assent of the Powers, stipulated by the Berlin Treaty, has not been obtained in ratification of Prince Ferdinand of Coburg's claims as Prince of Bulgaria. Such being the case, his presence at the head of the Principality, is illegal and contrary to the Berlin Treaty. The Russian Imperial government, therefore, requests that the Sublime Porte shall officially communicate the above statement to the Bulgarian Government, and officially announce to the Great Powers that this communication has been made.'

This communication was supported by the French and German Ambassadors, out of respect for the Berlin Treaty. Prince Bismarck did not refuse the assistance which Russia had solicited, it being to his advantage to give that country a proof of his friendship; but we are justified in believing that, in granting this assistance, he was well aware that it could in no wise obstruct the policy followed by the Italo-Anglo-Austrian *entente*, which he had helped to bring about.

The Russian communication elicited the following declaration from Said Pacha :

(From the French.)

'*From His Highness the Grand Vizier, to  
Monsieur Stambuloff, Sofia.*

'At the time of Prince Ferdinand of Coburg's arrival in Bulgaria I declared to His Highness, by means of my telegram of the 22 Chewal 1887, that

his election by the Bulgarian General Assembly not having obtained the recognition of all of the Powers signatories of the Berlin Treaty, and this election, moreover, not having been ratified by the Sublime Porte, his presence in Bulgaria was both contrary to the Berlin Treaty and illegal.

‘To-day I wish to declare to the Bulgarian government that in the eyes of the Imperial government the situation is unaltered, that is to say that the presence of Prince Ferdinand at the head of the Principality is illegal and contrary to the Berlin Treaty.

‘You are requested to acquaint the government to which you are accredited with the contents of this despatch.

SAID.’

In announcing this declaration to Crispi, Photiades Pacha assured him that the Porte would take no further steps without concluding an agreement with all the Powers.

The Powers merely ‘took note’ of Said Pacha’s declaration, which had no noticeable effect upon the state of affairs.

Prince Ferdinand did not move; his government, presided over by the energetic Stambuloff, devoted its attention to watching and striking efficacious blows at the numerous agitators and Russian refugees who were labouring to foment uprisings, thus disproving the accusation which had been spread throughout Europe, that Bulgaria was in a state of anarchy.

For some time after this the Chanceries of the Powers devoted but scant attention to the Bulgarian Question. The Prince’s government continued its work of organisation, and Russia, although she would not acknowledge defeat, assumed an attitude of expectancy. Towards the close of the year 1889 fresh anxiety was aroused. The fact that Prince Ferdinand’s election had not been ratified was a source of vexation to the Bulgarian patriots, and lowered the prestige of Bulgaria, especially in the eyes of her neighbours, who, at that time, were both hostile to the new state and mistrustful

of her. Monsieur Stambuloff's government was suspected of harbouring the intention of proclaiming the legality of the constitution and the independence of his country, and this act was looked upon as implying a challenge to Russia and as being inopportune. While free to recognise that the abnormal conditions prevailing in Bulgaria must be regulated, Crispi did not feel that the time for this had come, and therefore advised Sofia to wait. He was of opinion that it would be wiser to seek to persuade the Russian government to cease its opposition. In fact, on November 1, 1889, he despatched the following telegram :

*To His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg.*

In the course of an interview with Baron Uxkull, we touched upon the subject of Bulgaria and Prince Ferdinand, and I expressed the conviction His Majesty's government entertains that the *status quo* must remain unaltered. I did not hide from him, however, that the Prince's experiment appears to us satisfactory, he having conducted himself throughout with circumspection, and displayed his ability to govern the Principality even under the most difficult conditions.

CRISPI.

The situation contained nothing, indeed, which could make it advisable to hasten a solution which was bound to come at last. At the beginning of November, in fact, the Imperial Chancellors of Austria-Hungary and Germany had held their annual conference, and had arrived at the conclusions set forth in the following despatch.—

VIENNA, 10/11/1889.

Kálmoky could not receive me until to-day, on his return from Friedrichsruhe. He informed me that he had found Prince Bismarck in excellent health, that he was entirely satisfied with the result of his conference with him, and added that they

were perfectly agreed upon all the questions under consideration. Prince Bismarck is pleased that the efforts of the allied Powers have been successful in ensuring peace during the past year, and trusts they may continue to do so in the future. Nevertheless Kálnoky stated that Bismarck agreed with him that the situation is unchanged, and, although peaceful at present, may at any moment cause fresh anxiety. As for Bulgaria, Bismarck admits that it will be wise to maintain a footing in the Principality and seek to keep it on our side, in order to prevent Russia from regaining supremacy there. As regards Greece, the situation in that country tends to become extremely critical, an attempt having been made to revive the question of Candia. Tricupis seemed inclined to take action and assume a hostile attitude towards Turkey, declaring his intention of taking up arms against her. Kálnoky trusts, however, that Tricupis will allow himself to be more wisely advised, and His Excellency added that during his recent visit to Athens, Emperor William himself had exhorted the Minister to moderation, that the German and Austro-Hungarian governments had done the same, and that he had no doubt Your Excellency would use your influence at Athens to the same purpose. With regard to Servia and Roumania, Kálnoky said that questions which might arise in those countries were not such as to cause fears for the peace of Europe, and that there was every reason to hope they might be localised.

#### AVARNA.

In January 1891 Crispi had a fresh opportunity to display his interest in Bulgaria. The Russian government complained that most of those Russian anarchists who succeeded in emigrating received a warm welcome and even obtained



occupation in Bulgaria. The Ambassador Uxkull was instructed to approach Crispi on the subject, consulting him in confidence and all friendliness. 'We are convinced,' so they wrote from St. Petersburg to the Ambassador, 'that serious admonitions from Rome would have the desired effect at Sofia, and put an end to a state of things of which the consequences would be most disastrous should it be allowed to continue.'

Crispi did not hesitate to comply with the Russian government's request, and despatched the following letter to the Italian Ambassador at Sofia, Gerbaix de Sonnaz:—

ROME, 16 *January*, 1891.

SIGNOR CONTE,—At the weekly reception which took place on the eleventh of this month, Baron Uxkull acquainted me with his government's complaints against the Bulgarian Ministry for having afforded protection to certain Russian nihilists. On the thirteenth he again referred to the matter in a semi-official manner, and reported the contents of a despatch he had received.

It is maintained that not only do these emigrants enjoy the protection of the Government at Sofia, but that several of them are employed in the administration of the Principality.

The political condition of Bulgaria being what it is, prudence demands that fresh causes for discord be avoided between the Principality and the powerful Empire to which it owes its independence. Monsieur Stambuloff and Prince Ferdinand must look to it that the country is rid of these undesirable guests.

Advice from a friendly and disinterested Government such as ours cannot but be welcome to those gentlemen. Animated by sentiments of the most cordial friendliness, we have worked for peace at

Sofia ever since the foundation of the Principality, and so we shall continue to do.

I have telegraphed to you to the same purpose.

CRISPI.

When Crispi returned to office at the close of the year 1893, Prince Ferdinand had not yet been recognised by the Powers. In the course of the discussion concerning the budget of foreign affairs which took place in the Chamber in May 1894, Crispi had occasion to allude to Bulgaria, for which country he expressed the warmest regard. His words provoked the exchange of the following telegrams:—

(From the French.)

*To Signor Crispi, Prime Minister.*

The address delivered by Your Excellency before the Chamber on the occasion of the discussion of the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been a source of great joy to the Bulgarian people, who have seen that at the moments of crisis and difficulty through which our country has passed, the Italian government, having at its head a champion who proved his valour in the struggle for the independence and unity of Italy, has taken up the cudgels in defence of a State whose political life is but just begun, protecting that State against foreign interference in its home affairs. I am but fulfilling a most welcome duty in presenting the Bulgarian government's sincere and hearty thanks to Your Excellency on this occasion, and I beg His Italian Majesty's government to further grant its friendly support to a people which is struggling for its existence, with the one end in view of its peaceful development.—The Prime Minister,

STAMBULOFF.

ROME, May 5, 1894.

*To His Excellency Monsieur Stambuloff,  
Prime Minister, Sofia.*

I thank Your Excellency for your telegram, and am glad that the sentiments I entertain for the Bulgarian people, and the principles that I sustained in their favour, are appreciated. CRISPI.

Soon after this Stambuloff fell from power, in consequence, it was said, of pressure brought to bear by Austria, which country was inconvenienced by the political activity of that eminent statesman in Macedonia. What caused the phial of Austrian indignation to overflow was, it appears, the coincidence of the exchange of telegrams above referred to between Stambuloff and Crispi—whom Austria suspected of intriguing in the Balkan Peninsula—and Stambuloff's boast that by obtaining the nomination of Bulgarian bishops in Macedonia, which the Sublime Porte had recently sanctioned, he had practically bound the future of Macedonia to that of Bulgaria.

One year later (July 1895) Stambuloff was assassinated, for reasons of political vengeance.

The provisional state of the Bulgarian Principality came to an end in 1896, without any further conflict. As Crispi had hoped, Russia was wearied into disarming. It could not be denied that, under Prince Ferdinand's government, Bulgaria had become a factor for order in the Balkan Peninsula, and that great progress was being made. Forced to relinquish all intention of dominating Bulgaria, the Russian government wisely resigned itself to accepting these altered conditions and adopting a less ambitious policy. Although Bulgaria did not wish to become a Russian province, she was disposed, nevertheless, to treat Russia with all the respect that was due her, conscious as she was of the fact that Russia had freed her from the Turkish yoke.

Prince Ferdinand even sacrificed his religious faith to the peace and interests of the State, by sanctioning his eldest son Boris' conversion to the Orthodox religion. The Prince came to Rome on January 27, 1896, was granted an audience by the Pope, and obtained the permission he sought. On February 8

the Czar telegraphed to the Prince, congratulating him on his 'patriotic resolve,' of which he, the Czar, had been informed, and consenting to act as god-father at Prince Boris' baptism. On that same day the official Russian organ declared the conflict with Bulgaria to be at an end, and remarked that 'the conversion of Prince Boris to the Orthodox religion proved that the Bulgarian people had grasped the necessity of affirming their religious faith as a pledge of those spiritual bonds which held them united to Russia, who had emancipated their country.'

A natural consequence of this change on the part of Russia was the invitation from the Sublime Porte to the Powers to recognise the Prince of Bulgaria in compliance with Article III. of the Berlin Treaty. The Powers all consented, and Italy was able to declare that she had been with Turkey in this recognition ever since the year 1887, that is to say, from the moment she had declared that, in her opinion, the manifestation of the will of the Bulgarian people was legal.

Throughout the European East the name of Francesco Crispi was long identified with the aspirations towards independence on the part of those peoples oppressed by the Turk. One after the other he defended all nationalities; he was head of the Philhellenic Committee, and raised his voice on every occasion, speaking from the rostrum of the Chamber, and at public meetings, on behalf of a greater Greece. He championed the autonomy and independence of Albania; he sought and found, in heroic Montenegro, a bride for the heir to the Italian throne, and, while in office, did what he could to save Candia and Armenia from periodical massacres at the hands of the Turks.

At this historic moment, when the idea of the military federation of the Balkan peoples has materialised, special attention is due the two letters below transcribed, which bear an illustrious signature and contain an appeal for assistance for the Oriental Confederation, which an Athenian syllogiser addressed to Crispi.

CONFÉDÉRATION ORIENTALE,  
ATHENS, 24 October, 1885.

*To the Illustrious Statesman, Crispi.*

ILLUSTRIOUS MAESTRO,—The Committee and Board of Directors of the Oriental Confederation,



who, more than a year ago, founded the newspaper bearing the same title, and representing the interests of the movement for establishing a federal alliance among the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula, have the honour of soliciting your valuable and powerful protection in the task they have undertaken of resuming the work which was interrupted owing to the lack of efficient support.

We have sacrificed everything to this ideal, convinced as we are that its realisation will lead to the emancipation of these peoples, by the peaceful and logical means which all Europe desires. Both Turkey and Austria, however, began to wage war without quarter against us as soon as our first number was issued—Turkey because we talked of liberty to the Christians of the East, Austria because we demanded autonomy for Macedonia, which we hold to be the only means of reconciling the claims of the various races who inhabit that province.

By suppressing and persecuting our journal in the Balkan States, a death-blow was dealt at our undertaking. We made a brave struggle, but were eventually forced to yield.

This situation may interest you, illustrious *Maestro*, whose views are broad, and who bring a lofty intellect to bear upon all political and social problems ; whose heart is generous and easily stirred by injustice and suffering.

Our work, however, has not failed to bear fruit in the Orient, and certain far-seeing minds who share our ideal, encourage us to persevere, in the firm conviction that the confederation of the Eastern peoples is the most equitable solution for a problem which the jurisdiction of Europe has pondered for more than four centuries.

Is it not a matter of vital importance to the Mediterranean Powers that the Orient should not fall a prey to the greed of Austria and of Russia? These immense empires, once established on the shores of the Bosphorus and the Ægean, would threaten the independence of the Mediterranean States. We deem it therefore of paramount importance to contend against these projects, and to open the eyes of the unfortunate Christians of the Orient.

Such is the programme our journal will maintain, and for which, confiding in your lofty intelligence, we venture to solicit your valuable and benevolent assistance.

We have the honour to be, illustrious and revered *Maestro*, your respectful and grateful servants.—For the Committee and Board of Directors of the Oriental Confederation,

LEONIDA A. BULGARIS.

ATHENS, 8-20 November, 1887.

*To His Excellency Crispi, Rome.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—The idea, which, indeed, is not new, of an Oriental Confederation of all the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula is the result of profound study on the part of statesmen, who accept it as the one solution possible of the Eastern Question, if the equilibrium of Europe is to remain unshaken. For centuries terrible wars have been waged by those who sought to solve the problem by violence, but it has been made clear that this method is inadequate, for instead of advancing towards a conclusion, the question has become more and more complicated, and the unfortunate peoples of the Balkans are still exposed to the greed and antagonism of the Powers.

It follows that the Eastern Question can be resolved only by peaceful means, that is to say by forming the states of the Balkan Peninsula into a Confederacy, this being the only arrangement possible which will not offend any one of the Powers.

The Greek association known as the *Oriental Confederation*, which was founded three years ago, loudly proclaimed these opinions, and maintained them in the Press; but, as was to be expected, this association was combated by all those whose interest it is that discord should continue to reign in the East.

The Viennese press especially distinguished itself in combating the ideas championed by our journal, these ideas being inconvenient to the Austrian policy, and forming an obstacle to Austria's plans of conquest in the Peninsula of Haemus, for the main purpose of our association is to protest against any foreign conquest in European Turkey.

But in order to render our undertaking successful, constant and practical efforts are necessary, as no one of the governments of the Balkan States can take the initiative and propose the Confederation to the other governments before this idea has matured throughout the East. This result can be achieved only by founding everywhere throughout the states of the Balkan Peninsula associations for promoting the Oriental Confederation, which, while spreading among the people a knowledge of the advantages of confederation, shall labour to find a means of bringing this most important undertaking to a happy conclusion.

Fortunately, moreover, powerful parties are forming throughout the Balkan States, which, alive to

the dangers that threaten these states, aim at a Confederacy as the only means of salvation; and it is in consideration of this movement that the Greek association, which had suspended its labours in consequence of events in Bulgaria, reflecting that racial hatred has now been overcome, and being well aware that certain Powers are ready to invade the Orient, now resumes its labours more resolutely than ever, in defence of the threatened autonomy of the Peninsula.

Before going further, our association must obtain the moral support of those who share its views, and especially of a State to which the Greek association for promoting the Oriental Confederation now appeals, soliciting its powerful assistance.

We beg Your Excellency to accept the expression of our highest consideration,

LEONIDA A. BULGARIS,

*Delegated Member of the Oriental Confederation.*

As early as 1877, in the course of a conversation with Prince Bismarck, the principle that the Great Powers should abstain from all conquest in the Balkan Peninsula<sup>1</sup> had been defended by Crispi, who, when Minister in 1889, further proposed that military federation of the Balkan States which the people have now organised on their own initiative.<sup>2</sup>

Such a proposal proves his firm conviction of its necessity, his honest appreciation of the rights of nations and, at the same time, of the interests of the peace of Europe. But the times were not ripe. Austria, who would not tolerate Russian hegemony in the Balkans because she wished to establish her own there, was opposed to Crispi's proposals, protesting that she did not wish to wound her rival's susceptibilities.

The Cretan Question had occupied the attention of Europe at intervals ever since the morrow of the Berlin Congress. If the Powers had been unanimous in demanding good govern-

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Crispi, *Foreign Policy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.



ment from Turkey, this source of anxiety and hotbed of revolt would have been abolished, the Cretans' aspirations of being joined to Greece having always found their greatest incentive in the general malcontent produced by Turkish tyranny. But even when dealing with the Candian Question, the Powers, jealous one of the other, were but playing their game for acquiring influence at Constantinople, and if they abstained from following the one course which would have been efficacious, it was because they would not offend the Sultan. Let us give an illustration of this attitude. In 1889 Crispi telegraphed as follows to the Embassies at London, Berlin, and Vienna :—

31 *July*.

The unrest in Candia does not appear to be the result of outside causes, but rather of the malcontent produced by Turkish misrule. An understanding among the friendly and allied Powers appears to us to be necessary for the purpose of advising the Porte as to the best means of meeting the emergency. We believe that conciliatory methods will be more efficacious in pacifying the population than violent ones, as such always leave behind them the germ of fresh disorder. Oblige me by acquainting the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government to which you are accredited with these views of ours, and also by inquiring what instructions, if any, have been imparted to the Government's representative at Constantinople.

CRISPI.

And now let us examine the result of this straightforward action. Prince Bismarck was opposed to any pressure being brought to bear upon the Sublime Porte.

‘It is His Highness’ opinion that any pressure, even of a passive nature, would but serve to gradually increase the pretensions of the Cretans. One of the most disastrous results of interference would

be that malicious Franco-Russian insinuations at Constantinople would gain in importance.'

From Vienna Count Nigra telegraphed that it would have been Kálnoky's wish to act in unison with the allied Powers and England, but that he preferred keeping in the background. 'France appears to have pronounced in favour of Turkey,' Nigra stated, and concluded as follows:—

'I believe that Your Excellency will not elect to follow Robilant's example by taking too conspicuous a position in the immediate foreground. At all events I must warn you that, according to Kálnoky's report, your proposal of July 30 came to the Sultan's ears, who, suspicious as he always is, did not hide his displeasure.'

From London—Lord Salisbury's reply:—

'I fully sympathise with Crispi's views and apprehensions concerning the Candian Question. I should be in favour of united action, but it is not easy to decide what line of action would be most successful. Military occupation by one of the Powers or by Greece would fling Turkey into the arms of Russia, and immediately cause a most undesirable outburst of excitement in the Balkan Peninsula.'

After all, Crispi had not proposed armed intervention, but merely an act of diplomacy which, being performed collectively by four great Powers, would have achieved its purpose. His proposal was allowed to drop in order to avoid worrying the Sultan by an admonition to fulfil his duty. And this abstention, for motives of self-interest, was repeated whenever the question of reform in Macedonia, Armenia, and Albania was under discussion, and to it alone is due the long duration of an iniquitous regime which, having become an extreme evil,

was bound to end in destruction by means of an extreme remedy—war waged by the oppressed against their oppressors.

Crispi's regard for Albania was not unconnected with the memory of the origin of his own family, which had emigrated from Albania in the fifteenth century, and established itself, after many wanderings, at Palazzo Adriano in Sicily. But, devoted as he was to the principle of national autonomy, he was ever hopeful that the Albanese nation would shake off the Turkish yoke and become an independent state; and when, on the eve of the Berlin Congress, Prince Bismarck and Lord Derby referred to Albania as a possible compensation to Italy for the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Crispi was not pleased with the proposal. We are not prepared to say what he would have done had he been in office when the Congress entrusted Austria with the administration of the two Turkish provinces for an indefinite period, but the fact remains that in those agreements which he concluded later on as Minister with Austria-Hungary and England, the independence of Albania was recognised as the ultimate destiny of that country, should it one day become detached from the Ottoman Empire.

In Crispi's Diary we find an allusion to Albania among the notes concerning a conversation he had on October 26, 1896, with Domenico Farini, president of the Senate.

‘In 1877, as you are probably aware, we were opposed to Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I expressed the opinion of the Italian government to Derby and Bismarck, who both replied: *Prenez l'Albanie!* with a simultaneousness which struck me as astonishing.

‘I naturally demanded: *Qu'est-ce que nous devons en faire?*

‘Whereupon Derby said: *C'est toujours un gage!*

‘And Bismarck added: *Si l'Albanie ne vous plaît pas, prenez une autre terre turque sur l'Adriatique.*

‘The true meaning of the two statesmen's words was clear to me, I having alleged the military

defence of Italy as a motive for my refusal to give Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria. Our Eastern frontiers are exposed to hostile invasion, and to reinforce Austria with new territory would be distinctly disadvantageous to Italy.'

But although the annexation of Albania to Italy may not have been one of the items on Crispi's programme, nevertheless he would certainly have refused to consent to an arrangement which should place that Turkish province under the domination of another Power. In a passage from his pen, composed on May 1, 1900, he expressed his opinion on this point in the following terms:—

'It has recently been carelessly asserted that Viennese diplomacy contemplates the occupation of Albania. This is a strange assumption indeed. Albania is not Slavonic; the Albanians are a nation with a personality of their own, with their own language and habits, which point to a Pelasgian origin.

'Such being the case, we can understand that, in compliance with what has long been that country's foremost desire, Albania be allowed to proclaim her independence. But it would be a grave error to seek to incorporate her with the Slavonic countries of Europe.

'Albania held out longer than any other country against Turkish occupation. If, in the fifteenth century, after the death of Castriota she was obliged to yield and accept the Ottoman yoke, at least she was never truly conquered, and in this century she was the first to risk vigorous rebellion. The finest heroes of the Hellenic struggle for emancipation were Albanians, and had Greece possessed powers of assimilation, this people, whose political aspirations and religious beliefs have so much in common



with their own, might perhaps have belonged to Greece to-day. Instead, however, many Albanians came to settle in southern Italy and Sicily.

‘At the present moment Austria would derive no benefit from the annexation of Albania, while Italy would suffer irreparable injury, for by such annexation all vestige of her influence on the Adriatic would be swept away. Such an affront to our claims and rights, which a glorious and ancient tradition has sanctified, will certainly not be offered.

‘Albania possesses all the elements essential to the formation of an independent state,—she is better equipped, indeed, than either Servia or Bulgaria,—and in granting her autonomy Europe would but accomplish a work of civilisation. The intimate and cordial relations which have prevailed between Italy and Albania for more than five centuries have brought her nearer to ourselves than to Austria, and her annexation to that Empire would but add to the racial discord and confusion of tongues already prevailing in Austria.’

On several occasions, however, petitions were presented to Crispi by Albania which failed to elicit from him either encouragement or approval. We will cite but one such petition, to which reference is made in the following letter :

JANNINA, 6 *January*, '96.

SIGNOR AMBASCIATORE,—Dr. Fanti, a native of Argirocastro and an Italian subject, has just returned from Argirocastro, whither he had gone on business connected with his profession. On his arrival here Dr. Fanti immediately sought an interview with me, in the course of which he made the following statements.

He informed me that on his arrival at Argiro-castro he had received visits from most of the Albanian Beys, both Mussulman and Christian, who urged him to see the *Cavaliere* Millelire without delay on his return to Jannina, and request him to acquaint the Italian government with their views.

The Beys declared to Fanti that there was no longer any doubt that Turkey would soon suffer disintegration, and that, in anticipation of this impending catastrophe, all true Albanians, both Mussulman and Christian, had fixed their eyes on the country beyond the Adriatic. They furthermore declared that never would they unite with Greece; that rather than do so they would burn their homes and slay their children; that all their hopes and desires were centred in their Italian brothers and their worthy leader His Excellency Crispi, with whose energy, ability, and regard for Albania that country is already acquainted.

The Beys added that, on the day on which the Italian flag should appear on the shores of *Epirus*, a shout of joy would greet the banner of civilisation, and that their Italian brothers would be welcomed with open arms throughout the land.

In order to relieve myself of all responsibility, I have deemed it my duty to submit to Your Excellency the message which Dr. Fanti brought me from the Albanian Beys. I have sent them a vague and comprehensive answer, not wishing to compromise my future attitude or that of His Majesty's government.—His Majesty's Consul,

MILLELIRE.

The marriage of our present August Sovereigns, the Prince of Naples and Princess Elena of Montenegro, was celebrated in Rome with much solemnity in October 1896.

It was Francesco Crispi who first contemplated such an alliance, as early as the year 1894, and it was perhaps the only part of his political legacy which his successor, Marchese di Rudinì, did not seek to set aside. Rudinì, indeed, enjoyed all the glory of having brought about this union, and, on the occasion of the wedding, King Humbert conferred upon him the highest Italian order, the Collar of the *Annunziata*.

The reasons which persuaded Crispi to single out Elena Petrovich amongst all the eligible princesses of the different courts of Europe are briefly and concisely set forth in the *Diary*.

On December 5, 1896, Crispi called upon King Humbert.

‘After a short delay I was ushered into the King’s study. The King embraced me and kissed me, and we immediately entered into conversation.

‘CRISPI.—On receipt of the work on Montenegro which Your Majesty had the goodness to send me, I felt it my duty to come and express my gratitude for the valuable gift, and at the same time to explain the motives that moved me to propose a marriage between Princess Elena and Your Majesty’s august son, the Prince of Naples.

‘My reasons are three in number—(1) we should be allying ourselves with a family who could exert no influence over us; (2) the Princess has good blood in her veins; (3) such an alliance, in case of war in the East, would give us a foothold in the Balkan Peninsula.’

Down to the last day of his life Crispi never ceased to hope that the Turks would be driven back into Asia, and that the Balkan peoples, freed from the barbarous domination under which they had languished for centuries, would unite and form a powerful state.

In the course of an interview with a correspondent of the *Paris Figaro*, which took place in 1897, Crispi summed up the opinions he had always professed in the following terms:—

‘The Turk in Europe is a permanent offence to the rights of nations. Four centuries and a half have not sufficed to naturalise him, nor has he succeeded in fusing into united nations the various races over whom he has exerted and still exerts his cruel sway.

‘His language has no literature ; upon his accursed soil the fine arts do not flourish to gladden the heart of man ; in his country it is impossible to establish municipal government, for the town-hall must ever be either in the church or the synagogue ; the tribes are ranked according to the religion they profess, and not according to the degree of civilisation they have achieved, which alone may promote gentleness and honesty.

‘In the same region, the same city—if the name can be applied to those clusters of filthy hovels which fire comes at intervals to cleanse and renew—in the same city there are herded together the Greek, the Slavonian, the Roumanian, and the Albanian, all mistrusting and hating each other ; and above this herd hovers the Turk in all his brutality and savagery, whose very religion incites him ever to fresh acts of hatred and vengeance.

‘Abdul Hamid, steeped in vice and a coward to boot, Caliph—that is to say king and sovereign pontiff—head of the state and head of the faith, Abdul Hamid is absolutely imperious to the reforms introduced by civilisation in the government of nations, and for every reform in favour of the Christians he finds an obstruction in some passage in the Koran.

‘This state of moral disorder is perpetuated by the antithesis which dominates the political exigences of each one of the Great Powers. I am unaware what



the terms of the Franco-Russian alliance may be ; I would but point out that at Tilsit, when Napoleon and Alexander were discussing the re-partition of the old continent, the great Emperor was willing to yield the Danubian provinces, but refused to give up Constantinople to the Czar. There is talk of a European agreement for resolving the Eastern Question. Illusions, these ! Such an agreement would be absolutely powerless. Heretofore the Powers have struggled to prevent the Russian from possessing himself of Constantinople.

‘ In 1854 the Western Powers invaded the Crimea, and Czar Nicholas was forced to suspend the advance of his forces. In 1878 Czar Alexander, threatened by the English fleet, was obliged to stop at Santo Stefano. The Turkish Empire was saved ; Muscovite ambition was once more arrested in its periodical outburst ; but the Eastern Question was not settled.

‘ This is a danger which must be removed, once and for all ; this is a problem which we must have the courage to solve, and not go on handing down from year to year, for future generations to grapple with. At Paris in 1856, save for the proclamation of certain principles of international law concerning the liberty of the seas, the Powers represented at the Congress devoted all their attention to safeguarding the existence of the Ottoman Empire. Blood and money were lavished in vain, for the London Conference of 1871 restored to the Czar everything he had forfeited, this being the premium Germany was bound to pay to Russia for the attitude of neutrality she had maintained during the Franco-Prussian war.

‘ To-day we are back at the very beginning of the

Eastern Question again. The Armenian massacres, twice repeated, are followed by the Cretan massacres. Europe is stirred! The Great Powers send their ships into Greek waters! Turkish fury burst forth with greater violence than ever, and the peoples of the Balkans threaten an insurrection!

‘How is this grim tragedy to end? Will the Great Powers go on administering empiric remedies for the healing of this Oriental sore, which every day becomes more envenomed?

‘I ask the French: can you suggest a remedy? Would you have the courage to give Constantinople to the young Czar, and thus enable him to reconstruct the Byzantine Empire? That would be contrary to your traditions, which enjoin upon you to protect those who suffer oppression. As for my friend Bismarck, who would not sacrifice a single Pomeranian soldier for or against the Sultan, it is easy to guess what his answer to this question would be. He is of opinion that the Czar, master of Constantinople, would be far weaker than he is to-day, shut in by ice and snow, and that Europe would find no difficulty in overpowering him. For my part, I should not wish to make the attempt, and my remedy is of a different nature. The Italian National Party, in whose ranks I have been a humble soldier, hopes, one day, to see a Balkan Confederacy, with Constantinople as its capital. The elements which would go to compose this new political arrangement, exist in the five states whose independence Europe has recognised—Roumania, Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, and Montenegro. Form other states if you will, or join peoples of the same race, language, and religion to those states already existing, and order will be permanently restored

throughout that region. The Mussulman may find a place in this Confederacy if such be his wish, but it must be as a brother and not as a master. Let the Czar remain within his present frontiers, and let the Sultan withdraw into Asia. Let Greece give up all intention of resurrecting *Byzantium*, which is a memorial of the downfall, not of the life of an empire. Thus would the Eastern Question be definitely resolved and the peace of Europe preserved.

‘The Balkan Confederacy should remain neutral.’

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES AND THE EUROPEAN CONCERT

Gladstone and the Armenian massacres—The Powers demand an international investigation—The Sultan entreats the delegates of the Powers not to examine the witnesses—Results of the investigation, and the Sultan's refusal to grant the reforms proposed to him—Russia opposed to coercive measures against the Sultan—Fresh massacres—The Ambassadors demand a second guardship at Constantinople—The European fleet in the Levant—England wishes to depose the Sultan.

THE Armenian massacres of 1894-96 filled the world with horror. William Gladstone, whose mighty voice thundered against every form of tyranny, expressed it as his opinion that: ‘. . . the Assassin himself, and not his Mahometan subjects, was the willing author of the Armenian massacres from beginning to end: that these atrocities are without parallel in modern history: that in dealing with Turkey, the European Concert has proved itself a pitiful and ugly farce: that the method of remonstrance to which the Powers confined themselves, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that nothing can be accomplished without force, has been a moral crime and a political error: that certain sovereigns and their governments have openly protected and favoured the Assassin, and that the presence of the embassies at Constantinople is, after all, but a mockery: that by countenancing the ruler's evil



actions they are lending him support : that coercive measures should long since have been adopted, and that such measures might even now serve to prevent another series of massacres more horrible than those we have already witnessed.'

Of these massacres a competent Italian journalist wrote in a report on the condition of Turkey, which he presented to Crispi in December 1895 :—

' Your Excellency is as well aware as I am that the Armenian massacres, as well as those which took place in Bulgaria in 1875, were the natural outcome of the traditional Turkish policy which, whenever the Christian element has prevailed over the Turkish in any part of the Empire, either as regards numbers, riches, or culture, has immediately restored the equilibrium by the primitive method of decimation. When, thanks to the application of the Midhat Pacha regulations, the Vilayet of Bulgaria had been converted into a country which, as regards administration, was practically autonomous, and the fruits of this reform became apparent—the Bulgarians founding schools, sending their sons to study in Europe, and giving various other signs of awakening and of a desire to cast off barbarism—Constantinople immediately gave the signal to act, and those massacres began which led to the Turko-Russian war and to the freedom of Bulgaria.

' The same thing happened in Armenia. No sooner had the transformation of the Patriarchate into an elective institution, and the formation in London of an Armenian Committee championing the idea, if not of political independence at least of administrative autonomy, opened the Sultan's eyes to the fact that the Armenians, who were already

masters of three-quarters of the wealth of the Empire, were aroused to a consciousness of their moral superiority and of their rights, than the massacres were determined upon.'

Towards the close of the year 1894 public opinion in Europe, exasperated by the awful slaughter of Christians by Kurds in Armenia (information concerning which had leaked out in spite of the terror and efforts at concealment of the Ottoman government), demanded the intervention of the Powers and an international inquiry.

The English government was best fitted to present the demand, the Armenians being under the protection of England, which country had officially undertaken to defend them, by virtue of the Anglo-Turkish Convention which followed the Berlin Treaty. The Anglo-Armenian Committee, moreover, to which many prominent Englishmen belonged, had started a movement that the Government could not well overlook.

In the hope of throwing dust in the eyes of the Powers, the Sublime Porte despatched certain Ottoman functionaries into Armenia, who were to make an inquiry. Soon perceiving, however, that no one would trust the reports of these officials, Said Pacha began by offering to allow the American Ambassador at Constantinople to delegate an American member of the Ottoman Commission, and presently declared his willingness to accept an English vice-consul as well.

But the English government demanded that the Commission be international, and advised the Porte to invite France and Russia to send delegates. The invitations were despatched and accepted by the Governments of Paris and St. Petersburg. Hereupon the Italian government demanded that one of our vice-consuls be admitted also.

The Italian Ambassador, Catalani, telegraphed on December 15:—

'In the course of our interview, Nelidow (Russian Ambassador) expressed himself most emphatically against the Italian Consul's participation in the inquiry. He declared that Italy has no interests at

stake in Armenia, that our participation would give the inquiry a political character, and encourage the population to rebellion. I sought, but of course in vain, to refute his arguments, this Russian opposition being a prearranged matter.'

If it was true that Italy had no direct interests at stake in Armenia, her participation in the inquiry was all the more to be desired on this account, as offering the Armenians, the Porte, and Europe herself, a still stronger guarantee of impartiality and justice. Catalani insisted, being well aware that England was in favour of Italian participation, and succeeded in getting a delegate of his own appointed a member of the Commission, notwithstanding the pressure which France and Russia brought to bear on Said Pacha. It had been agreed between the English, French, and Russian Ambassadors that the European consuls at Erzeroum should appoint delegates to accompany the Turkish Commission of Inquiry; these delegates were empowered to choose the places to be visited, to point out the persons to be examined and, in special cases, to examine witnesses themselves. On December 20 Catalani telegraphed:

'The Sublime Porte having as yet failed to reply to the collective Note despatched by the three Ambassadors, nothing has been concluded concerning the position the delegates will occupy as members of the Turkish Commission. Yesterday the Sultan sent an ex-Grand-Vizier to the French Ambassador, with the declaration that he was ready to order the immediate removal of all the officials implicated in the recent massacres, on condition that the delegates do not accompany the Commission, or at least that they be not allowed to examine witnesses in special cases. The fact is that the Sultan fears Zechi Pacha will produce the *firman* containing the order for the massacres, which he received from His Majesty. The Sultan's proposal was, however, declined. The

three Ambassadors have invited the Sublime Porte to order the Commission to halt wherever it may now be, declaring the inquiry, which has been carried on in the absence of the delegates, to be null and void. The English Ambassador believes it will be two weeks before the delegates are ready to join the Commission.'

After this the three Ambassadors could not well yield—not even the French and Russian representatives, who were the most favourable to the Ottoman government—and the Sultan, fearing that England, left to herself, would start an inquiry on her own account, placed no further restrictions upon the European delegates.

On the completion of this inquiry, which established the grave responsibility both of the Ottoman authorities and of the system, a schedule of necessary reforms was drawn up by the Ambassadors, and a proposal made to establish a European Commission for the supervision of their application.

The Italian delegate made a separate inquiry on behalf of his Government.

Now what did the Ottoman government do? Was the sage advice of the Powers unhesitatingly accepted?

On June 4, 1895, Catalani telegraphed as follows :—<sup>1</sup>

‘Contrary to all expectations, the Sultan’s reply to the three Ambassadors was a refusal. His Majesty declares that the reforms previously prescribed shall be applied throughout Armenia, but that he will not tolerate foreign control of any sort. Last night the three Ambassadors decided to

<sup>1</sup> Ambassador Tommaso Catalani died suddenly at Terapia on July 28. He was a man of prudence and energy, possessing a profound knowledge both of the hidden and open ambitions of the Great Powers, and a broad understanding of all the resources of the diplomatic game. His unexpected death was a great loss. He had risen in his profession step by step, and had gained universal esteem and trust wherever he had held office. His long residence in England—1869-1889—had tempered his character, refined his natural qualities, and helped to make him one of the best representatives Italy had. Crispi cherished the greatest esteem and affection for Catalani.



report this answer to their Governments and await instructions.'

On June 17 the Porte announced that the reforms in question would be carried out in accordance with Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, that this would be done under the supervision of a 'perfectly trustworthy' High Commission, and that the Embassies would be kept informed of the progress the reforms were making.

Russia and France, who had accepted the invitation to participate in the inquiry for the sole purpose of keeping England in view, were ready enough to differ from her in their way of looking at the affront which had been offered. 'The English Ambassador is much vexed,' a telegram received at Rome reported, 'but the Russian representative should take the matter almost with indifference.' Lord Salisbury, who had just returned to office, could do nothing beyond appealing to Berlin to instruct the German Ambassador at Constantinople to suggest to the Sublime Porte that as many as possible of the reforms proposed be accepted, in order 'not to place the new English Cabinet in an awkward position with regard to public opinion.'

The Powers being disunited, it was but natural that the Turkish government should continue its system of disregarding all its promises. On the first of October a great crowd of Armenians assembled before the Patriarchate at Constantinople, and proceeded thence to the Sublime Porte by different ways, for the purpose of presenting a memorial concerning the reforms. At various points in Stamboul the gendarmery assailed the throng, killing and wounding several, and making numerous prisoners.

The Italian Embassy despatched the following information to Rome:—

'The throng of Armenians is still stationed outside the Patriarchate. They protest that they will not disperse unless they are given some guarantee for their safety.

'Fresh details received concerning the events

which took place yesterday, confirm the reports of fierce acts of repression, and of prisoners treated with unheard of cruelty. To-day isolated incidents have occurred in different parts of the city. The situation in Galata is also considered very serious.'

Once more the Embassies of the Great Powers united in calling the attention of the Porte to the exceptional gravity of what was going on before its eyes, declaring that they had received information from reliable sources to the effect that 'private citizens of the Mussulman faith had beaten and killed certain Armenian prisoners in the hands of police agents, who had not even sought to protect them; that attacks by private citizens on perfectly inoffensive individuals had taken place, and that the wounded prisoners had been murdered in cold blood in the police courts and prisons.'

On October 4 the Armenian Patriarch solicited the protection of the Ambassadors for his terrified countrymen. He declared that he was unable to persuade them to leave the churches where they had taken refuge. In compliance with this appeal, the Ambassadors presented a collective Note to the Porte, in which, after once more emphasising the gravity of past events, they demanded that the Ottoman Government inform them what measures it proposed to adopt for quieting the Mussulman and Armenian agitation, providing against the repetition of like deplorable episodes, and the protection of Christians and foreigners. They also demanded that an immediate and searching inquiry be instituted, and they resolved to order the ships stationed in those waters to draw nearer to Constantinople.

The following information was telegraphed from Trebizond on the eighth and tenth of October :—

'Terrible Armenian massacre; city entirely at the mercy of armed Turks. Troops few and powerless, allowed massacre to proceed, soldiers even participating in slaying and pillaging. Many victims. Consulate, church, school protected, but still

in great danger. Troops must be despatched immediately from Constantinople.'

'Massacre which took place day before yesterday lasted from eleven to four o'clock, and was followed by complete sack of Armenian houses and shops. More than five hundred (?) victims. During the following night the same thing happened in neighbouring villages. Yesterday relative calm prevailed, save for a panic produced by false reports maliciously circulated. Many refugees still at Consulate. A positive fact that massacres were planned with connivance of civil and military authorities. Vali, disregarding formal promise, did not apply for troops until after massacre. Last night a battalion arrived with major-general, appointed president of military tribunal. State of siege proclaimed to-day. Russian ironclad expected.'

When the excitement had somewhat subsided—although it was by no means extinguished—the Sublime Porte finally made up its mind to resume the programme for the Armenian reforms which the three Ambassadors had proposed. These were proclaimed on October 7 by means of an Imperial *irade*. Not all of the reforms, which England especially had insisted upon, had been granted, but Lord Salisbury was forced to content himself for the time being, although he had little hope that these inadequate measures would suffice to pacify the country.

The text of the reforms decided upon had been communicated officially to the three Ambassadors only. In order that they might stand on an equal footing with the other Powers in supervising the Porte's action in the fulfilment of obligations assumed towards the whole of Europe, Italy, Germany, and Austria were obliged to solicit like treatment, alleging the Berlin Treaty in justification of their demand.

The question, in fact, was still far from being concluded. The massacres of Christians still continued in Armenia, and further collective intervention on the part of the Powers was proposed, for the purpose of inviting the Porte to exert its

authority for the maintenance of public order. But the French and Russian Ambassadors declined, declaring that such a step would be ineffectual and undesirable. The truth was that the Imperial government, having let loose the demon of religious fanaticism and hatred, was now powerless to check its fatal action, and the worst feature of the situation was that anarchy was invading other provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Matters reached such a pass that the six ambassadors, confronted by the impending danger, could not but unite in protesting, their protest taking the form of an *ultimatum*. Hereupon the Sultan dismissed all his Ministers, and removed Kiamil Pacha whom he mistrusted, banishing him to Aleppo. But the choice of his new counsellors merely served to increase the general mistrust of his intentions. What was thought of Abdul Hamid in the diplomatic circles of Constantinople in those days (November 1895) is revealed in the following lines :

‘The German Ambassador at Constantinople is of opinion that the Sultan maintains his position only by means of an intricate network of espionage extending in every direction, which, by rendering each man suspicious of his neighbour, prevents conspiracies. Marschall believes the gravity of the situation is increasing. Russia and England declare they will not intervene, but should a catastrophe occur, certain events might overcome their determination. It is foreseen that it may become necessary to depose the present Sultan and appoint his legal successor in his place. In any case Marschall counts upon the close union which it is indispensable that the Powers forming the Triple Alliance should preserve.’

Meanwhile the new Italian ambassador at Constantinople, Pansa, had telegraphed as follows :—

‘Kiamil left to-day for Smyrna, which city has been appointed, at his own request, as his place of banishment instead of Aleppo. There is a rumour of further alterations to take place in the Cabinet.



A repetition of the Armenian demonstration is feared at Pera, which would cause dangerous complications. The Sultan is in a state of feverish agitation, which makes any surprise possible. All the Ambassadors met to-day for the purpose of concerting measures of defence in case of need.'

Hereupon Crispi immediately ordered the Italian fleet to be despatched into Turkish waters, and at the same time the French government decided to send a division of its Mediterranean squadron into the Levant.

The vessels *Re Umberto*, *Doria*, *Stromboli*, *Etruria*, and *Partenope* sailed from Naples on November 16.

Meanwhile the Ambassadors to the Sultan had telegraphed to their respective Governments that, in consideration of the ever-increasing malcontent among the Turks, and of a not improbable catastrophe at the Palace, the presence of a second guardship in the Bosphorus was indispensable, which vessel should be equipped with a sufficient number of marines for the protection of the embassies. On receiving the authorisation to do so, the Ambassadors demanded the *firman* granting permission for a second guardship to enter the Dardanelles. But the Sultan, regardless of his Ministers' advice, refused this permission, fearing that Europe was preparing to depose him. The representatives of the Great Powers met at once, and the English Ambassador, Currie, proposed that, should the Sultan persist in his refusal, the second guardship be escorted into the Dardanelles by the fleets. But the French and Russian Ambassadors demurred, declaring that they had no instructions from their Governments on this point.

Currie's proposal coincided with the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian chancellor, Count Goluchowski, which he had communicated to the Cabinets of the Powers on November 15. Goluchowski held that each Power should maintain a squadron in the East, from which the Ambassadors might obtain ships at a moment's notice for the protection of the lives and property of their compatriots. In case of need the protests of the Porte might then be disregarded and the warships brought into the Dardanelles.

A lively exchange of communications now took place between the different Cabinets, with the result that Russia, fearing that England, Austria, and Italy would act alone, ended by instructing her ambassador to second the proposals made by those Powers. France, faithfully following Russia's lead throughout, did the same. On December 10 an Imperial *firman* was granted to each of the six Great Powers.

The Russian government, however, did not omit to announce that it would go no further, that it would second no coercive measures like that proposed by Goluchowski, declaring that the Sultan's prestige must be maintained, and not weakened, if he was to restore order throughout his empire.

Seeing the European Concert thus disturbed, Crispi hoped that the future policy of England, Austria, and Italy, both in the Orient and the Mediterranean, would be that based upon the agreements of the year 1887, which had prevailed during his first term of office as Minister.

We are in possession of more than one document relating to Crispi's decision to take an active part in the crusade against Turkish misrule, which crusade, towards the middle of November 1895, appeared inevitable.

Italy, desiring to collaborate with England, promptly proclaimed her readiness to join the British fleet with her naval forces, and when the Italian squadron, under command of Rear-Admiral Accinni, had received its orders to start for the East, the Hon. Crispi sent for Accinni and the Hon. Bettolo, who was then captain (November 16), and bade them God-speed in the following terms:—

‘Let us do our duty, and hold the Italian flag aloft. I have perfect confidence in you. The nation's banner is in worthy hands! May the Almighty bless you!’

In the same Diary from which these words are transcribed, Crispi made the following entries:

‘*November 21.*—At 9.15 the Royal Family arrived (from Monza) in Rome. The King had requested me to come to the Quirinal, where he received me

at 10 o'clock. I explained the state of affairs in the Orient to His Majesty. The Powers are united in their action as regards the Porte. The step taken by Austria was ill-advised. It was not to be expected that Russia would allow the European fleets to enter the Dardanelles. She will not tolerate even temporary domination by another Power in the Black Sea, and was therefore bound to refuse. Her refusal, however, has not cancelled the agreements. The Sultan's position is precarious. He is between two fires: Mussulman fanaticism and the demands of Europe emphatically expressed. It will be fortunate for him, and for the Great Powers as well, if he succeed in restoring order throughout his Empire.

'Our fleet is at Smyrna. Rear-Admiral Accinni has been instructed to treat the French with the greatest consideration. Admiral Seymour has offered our squadron good anchorage at Salonica, but we have not yet occupied the position. Lord Salisbury has announced that the agreements of 1887 are to be maintained. He has furthermore declared his intention of co-operating with us, and states that, should the occupation of the Dardanelles become necessary, it would be Italy's task to expugn the Turkish fortresses.

'I hope for peace, but I have prepared for the possibility of war.'

The Powers having become disunited, Lord Salisbury was for many days undecided as to what course to pursue, his indecision, moreover, causing others to hesitate as well. The fact notwithstanding that on November 15 he had declared to the Italian Ambassador, General Ferrero, that he proposed 'to avail himself of our collaboration on the first occasion that should offer'; despite Baron Marschall's declaration that

certain reports from London had conveyed the information to him that the noble lord had finally 'made up his mind to withdraw within the limits of his former policy'; despite the fact that, on the seventeenth, Admiral Seymour, commanding the English squadron anchored at Salonica, had urged that the Italian fleet should join him without delay—at a time when, owing to Russia's refusal to participate in the demonstration in the Dardanelles, it had seemed that the attitude England had previously maintained must oblige her to go further—even at such a moment, we repeat, Lord Salisbury could not make up his mind to co-operate with his allies, but instead, towards the end of November, without forewarning to the Cabinets of Vienna and Rome, made a formal proposal at St. Petersburg for the establishment of a sort of protectorate of the Ottoman Empire, which proposal, however, Russia declined to consider.

The beginning of England's slow conversion to the Dual Alliance may be traced back to this period.



# THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER X

### A CRISIS CONCERNING THE ALLIANCES AND AGREEMENTS.

The foreign policy of Crispi's successors from 1891 to 1893—Immediate consequences of Italy's inertia in Eastern affairs pointed out by Blanc—Germany and Austria desire Crispi's return to office—Crispi's interview with the German and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors—Disorder at home in 1893-94 affects Italy's credit abroad—William II. and Crispi—Why Caprivi resigned the German Chancellorship—Hohenlohe's appointment—William II. favourably inclined towards Italy—Crispi and the Anglo-German disagreement concerning the Transvaal—Italy in international politics in 1896—A crisis concerning the alliances and agreements—Failure of attempts to re-establish former friendly understanding with England—From Crispi's Diary—Necessity of extending terms of the Triple Alliance for the protection of Italian interests in the Mediterranean and the Orient—Crispi's vehement protests—The German Emperor announces his intention of coming to Italy to confer with Crispi; but before the Emperor's arrival Crispi is obliged to withdraw from office.

As has already been pointed out in a preceding chapter, when Crispi resumed the reins of government he found Italy's position in Europe greatly altered. The Triple Alliance had indeed been renewed, but it had once more become what it was during its first period (1882-1887), an onerous obligation; and the special agreements with England and Austria-Hungary, which formed the complement of the Alliance, had become entirely ineffectual.

Either because Francesco Crispi's successors lacked that precious attribute, personal authority, or because their action was compromised by certain public declarations revealing a

desire to alter the direction of the Italian policy, the structure which had been raised by Crispi's strenuous endeavours quickly collapsed. Germany and Austria began to look upon us with suspicion; bewildered by Italy's protestations of friendship for her, and the fact that she nevertheless maintained her alliance with the Central Powers, France still preserved her hostile attitude; England, convinced of our instability and weakness, openly displayed her desire to establish an understanding, at all costs, with her old enemy, France. Thus the situation began gradually to shape itself as follows: Our alliances, while guaranteeing our territorial integrity, exposed us, nevertheless, to all the evils of that relentless warfare which France, knowing us to be defenceless, was everywhere carrying on against us, and we were, moreover, denied participation in those arrangements which controlled the major questions in the politics of Europe.

One of our most accomplished diplomatists, Baron Blanc, who occupied the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the second Crispi Cabinet, being in Constantinople in 1891 (which city, at that time, was a most important point of observation), had immediately sighted the dangers accompanying the altered direction of our policy, and had hastened to point them out.

TERAPIA, 30 *June*, 1891.

. . . It can no longer be hidden from the public (who are here beginning to be scandalised by the incapacity of diplomacy even to protect its subjects in foreign countries) that the European Concert being ruptured—for which rupture, albeit, the French and Russian Embassies make the Allied Powers responsible—those Allied Powers have failed to establish their active hegemony in its stead, and these conditions have resulted in anarchy in a government which, deprived of European supervision, is incapable of fulfilling either its national or international obligations. The Sultan does not believe the Anglo-Austro-Italian group capable of effectual and united action; he is con-

vinced that the Ambassadors are no longer in a position to meet and confer together ; he uses them one against the other, more successfully than he has ever been able to do before, and, in so far as he dares, defies them all.

The ministers and the royal household, who are all in the hands of money-brokers, and the Sultan himself, who is investing as much capital as he can get together, in England and America, are all awaiting the long-foreseen end, and recently the Sovereign actually asked one of his confidants the pointed question : ‘ What would you say if I accepted the Russian Protectorate ? ’ This would open the Bosphorus to Russia for military purposes, while the Dardanelles would remain closed to us. There would be neither armed resistance nor any popular uprising against Russia should she land her forces at a distance of but three hours from the capital. Would the English fleet and the allied squadrons have time, under such circumstances, to repeat the demonstration which took place at Santo Stefano in 1878 ? Probably not. And can we be sure that, once at Constantinople, Russia would be caught in a trap, or find herself in an indefensible position ? Perhaps so, from a naval or military point of view, but politically no one, not even the Bulgarian statists, would deny that a Byzantium restored to the Orthodox faith would exercise an irresistible attraction upon all the Slavonians of the Balkans, as in 1891 all the Italians rallied at the cry of ‘ Rome, the Capital ! ’ Then what would become of the various autonomies we have dreamed of, which only the political and naval supremacy of England and Italy in the Turkish ports could guarantee ? What would then become of the

German theory of Eastern expansion for Austria-Hungary? and of the possibility of satisfying—without a great war—the Anglo-Italian claims in the Mediterranean, while preserving the equilibrium of that sea? Have Germany and Austria failed to comprehend that, at certain moments, the presence at the head of one or other of the Balkan States, of a prince in whom they have confidence, will not suffice to prevent revulsions of the popular sentiment? We have but to recall the triumph of the cause of the reunion of Eastern Roumelia, which had encountered such violent opposition and been so greatly feared at Vienna and Berlin, to be convinced that, even in the Orient, the will of the people must be reckoned with.

As early as the year 1887 this Embassy was convinced that there is danger in applying the maxim *inertia sapientia* to a situation of this sort; that peace and the legal *status quo* do not suspend the course of the evolution of nations; that in the midst of peace, and the regime of alliances, should Egypt become English and the southern slopes of the Balkans become Bulgarian, it would be the more easy to establish fresh conditions in the Mediterranean, either favourable or contrary to the essential interests of Italy; that the peace programme, being in itself negative, Italy should not have been exposed to the danger of overlooking other positive aims in this alliance, and seeing only those odious ones attributed to it by our allies, namely foreign support for our monarchical institutions, or a mortgage, so to speak, upon the heritage of a France threatened with dismemberment; and that, in conclusion, in order that this alliance may become popular and profitable, and may appear to



the Italian mind in the light not of a necessary expedient to ensure safety, but as a basis for fruitful activity, we should, after having unfortunately refused that first premium of the alliance, Egypt, at least seek compensation by exerting a legitimate influence in the East, an influence resting upon the free development of autonomy in the Balkan Peninsula, and the naval and political supremacy of the four Powers in the ports of the Levant.

It was in consequence of these considerations that, in 1887, this Embassy proposed those agreements which were unhesitatingly adopted at Vienna and London. Those agreements, which my colleagues called the fundamental conditions of the new European policy in the East, and which, Sir W. White declared, established a date in history, marking the close of a century of warfare of which the leading features had been the partition of Poland and of Turkey; this starting-point of a new era of influence in favour of autonomy in the Balkans and the freedom of the Straits, an influence in the East (where deeds are deciding whether a Power be great or small) for which we are indebted to England and Austria-Hungary, both countries being at that time and for different reasons disposed to favour our intervention as more natural and fraught with fewer difficulties; this programme, in a word, whose practical execution, after the careful study of every particular, would have cost us infinitely less both in actual outlay and in men, than our military policy in the Red Sea has done; has this programme, we ask, become a dead letter at last? As early as 1888 my colleagues here declared that it no longer rested with them and with myself to take the initia-

tive in bringing about the peaceful and effectual application of these agreements, but that the Cabinets must concert this directly amongst themselves. Is there any reason to hope that similar aims will again prevail, and be extended beyond the question of the safety of our coasts to other peaceful enterprises in the Mediterranean?

An event of capital importance is taking place at the present moment, an event of which Italy is hardly conscious, namely the virtual partition of Africa between England, Germany, and France, these powers alone advancing towards the central points where, near the sources of the great rivers, the question of supremacy in the Dark Continent will one day be settled—while for us, as far as our interests in Africa and the Mediterranean are concerned, Tripolitania without the Hinterland thus becomes, as Monsieur de Radovitz has said, little better than valueless. The present peace and the apparent *status quo* form a curtain shutting out the spectators—a concealing curtain behind which the work of scene-shifting is being busily carried on, the result of which will startle the whole of Europe. While this is going on, I ask, are we destined to awaken too late to the fact that other, and, for us, no less important scenes have been shifted here, the preparations for which transformation our diplomacy has failed to note? ' . . .

CONSTANTINOPLE, 2 September, 1891.

On July 26 I notified Your Excellency that the English representative here had informed the Porte, by order of his Government, that owing to recent deplorable events, the conditions prevailing in Candia were becoming rapidly worse, and that there

was reason to fear that those who would benefit by a fresh uprising in the island might seize this opportunity for fomenting an insurrection.

On August 20 Sir W. White, on his return from a short trip to Germany, had a private conference with me, in the course of which he informed me that he would forward me a report concerning Cretan affairs as they now stand, after a mutual communication of views which has taken place between the Cabinets of London and Paris. He was in possession, he said, of the whole somewhat voluminous correspondence which had passed between Lord Salisbury and Monsieur Ribot, with which our representatives in Paris and London are unacquainted. On August 23 Sir W. White also spoke to Monsieur de Radovitz of a communication which he would presently make to him with regard to Candian affairs, but he did not, as far as I am aware, offer any further explanations.

On August 22, moreover, Your Excellency called my attention to the coincidence, which you did not believe was accidental, between the announcement made to us (with many marks of confidence) by Monsieur de Giers, that Russia intends to insist upon the Porte adopting measures calculated to meet the altered conditions in Candia, and the inquiry made at His Majesty's Ministry by the Greek representative at Rome, as to whether Italy would be disposed to join with several of the Great Powers in remonstrating with the Ottoman government concerning Candian affairs, even should Austria and Germany not participate in this action. On August 26 the Greek representative at Rome renewed this invitation, inquiring directly of Your Excellency whether Italy would join not only with Russia, who

had already announced her intentions to us, but with France and England as well, who, thus far, had maintained silence, in seeking to obtain a better government for Candia.

In consequence of these communications on the part of Greece and Russia, Your Excellency requested me, on August 28, to seek information concerning the news which had reached you 'from another quarter,' that England, with France and Austria-Hungary, had already approached the Porte on behalf of Candia. I replied, reminding you that on July 26 I had informed Your Excellency that England had taken the step with regard to the Porte to which I have again alluded above, and that since then no further advances had been made. Neither before nor after that date did my Austro-Hungarian colleague—so he himself informs me—communicate any information to the Porte other than the usual reports from the local Austro-Hungarian consuls, concerning the affairs of Crete. He also had been informed by Sir W. White that he would soon forward him a communication concerning Candian affairs, but since that time Sir W. White has confined himself, so Baron Calice tells me, to holding private conferences with the Ambassadors of France and Germany only. Austria-Hungary has thus shown us that she has remained a stranger to these negotiations, which fact should not be overlooked after the circumstances set forth in my report of the thirtieth of last June, which seemed to indicate that the Cabinets of London and Vienna were losing confidence in the Italian policy.

I was present at the British Embassy on the evening of the twenty-eighth, when Sir W. White



told me he had been waiting to see me in order to inform me of the result of his conference with our French colleague. In obedience with instructions received from his Government, he had had a final consultation with the Count de Montebello concerning the present condition of Candia, which, according to the latest reports received from the English and French consuls, appears to have improved somewhat. Neither he nor the Count had been able to propose any step other than a semi-official reminder to the Porte of the necessity for preserving peace and order in the island. The Count declared that he was opposed to any official complaints to the Porte, and in this Sir W. White entirely agrees with him. All this has been communicated to Lord Salisbury. Sir W. White further informed me that, for his part, unless his Government instructed him to do so, he would make no formal advances after the step he had taken in July, of which I informed Your Excellency, and he added that he could not foretell whether the French and Austro-Hungarian representatives would receive instructions for similar more or less private steps, but he believes that, in any case, all such would remain isolated. He deems concert among the foreign representatives in Constantinople to be unnecessary, as no agreement on this subject can or should be concerted save by the direct action of the Cabinets themselves. I take all these incidents as symptoms of the new system of isolation—itsself a consequence of previous alterations in the policy of Italy towards England and Austria-Hungary—an isolation concerning whose causes I have made it my duty to inform you at intervals, my last report on the subject being that of June 30.

On the twenty-ninth of August further information received convinced me that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had not remained inactive at the time the English *chargé d'affaires* took the step before mentioned, but that in his communications to the Grand Vizier he had displayed much anxiety because so many troops had been withdrawn from Candia, and had expressed the desire that the causes for complications arising from disturbances in the island might be removed. Later on Monsieur de Radovitz assured me that Baron Calice had indeed expressed these views in 'direct support' of the formal advances made by the English representative. Now, from these circumstances we may draw two conclusions. In the first place they confirm the information communicated to Your Excellency of the existence of an understanding concerning Candia, not only between England and France, but with Austria-Hungary as well, of which His Majesty's Government was not informed. And in the second place, they prove the conformity of the language used by Baron Calice with that of Monsieur de Giers, who, as Your Excellency was informed by telegram from St. Petersburg, exhibited much anxiety because the Ottoman government continued to withdraw troops from Candia, despatching them into the Yemen instead, where the situation is becoming more critical than ever, whereas the Russian government itself was seeking to remove all causes for international complications with regard to Candia.

There is, therefore, conclusive proof that the two Powers, England and Austria-Hungary, to whom we had bound ourselves by special agreements concerning the main points of our common interests in the

Mediterranean, had joined with Russia and France and taken steps with regard to Candian affairs of which news reached Your Excellency only from St. Petersburg and Athens.

The diplomatic corps here in Constantinople explained this circumstance by the fact that, in consequence of a series of conferences held with Monsieur Tricoupis at Sofia, the King of Greece had obtained from the Cabinets of London and Paris, certain compensations in Candia, for the advance of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, those Cabinets, as is well known, having formed closer relations during the negotiations that preceded the visit of the French fleet at Portsmouth. England was supposed to be inclined to favour the proposal to give the Cretans a Christian governor who should be personally acceptable to France, which country, in exchange, would desist from urging the withdrawal from Egypt. As for Austria-Hungary, she was evidently desirous both of avoiding any collective action which might place the Cretan Question before the world in the light in which Greece wished it to appear, and, at the same time, of appearing to facilitate the realisation of the project which would give the Greeks the advantage of the supremacy of French influence in Crete, a supremacy which would be to the advantage of the Austro-Hungarian interests as well, inasmuch as by coupling the French influence with the Russian, it would render this latter less exclusive at Athens.

Meanwhile a letter, which I did not expect, reached me from Monsieur de Radovitz, from which I gathered that, in my German colleague's opinion, Italy and Germany would lose nothing by refraining from participation in the negotiations the other

Great Powers were carrying on with regard to Candia. So striking was the coincidence between his invitation not to unite Italy with England and Austria-Hungary in their action with regard to a question which, after all, concerned the Mediterranean, and Sir W. White's oft-repeated declarations both to myself and Baron Calice, that the understandings established between the three Cabinets in 1887 no longer possessed any practical value; so striking was this coincidence, I repeat, that I did not hesitate to mention this delicate point in my answer to Monsieur de Radovitz, alluding to the evident attempt to exclude Italy from the Candian Question, concerning which only Russia and Greece had made any communications to Rome.

Sir W. White having spent the evening of the twenty-ninth at the German Embassy, after Monsieur de Radovitz had received my letter, came to me on the following morning to say that he was of opinion that, for the present, nothing could be done about Candia. I expressed the hope that the same close relations which have heretofore prevailed between himself, our Austro-Hungarian colleague and myself, might be maintained, and this for our common good. He replied that the question under consideration did not demand that we three concert together. Taking my cue from Count Nigra's report of August 4, I then observed to Sir W. White that, according to information received by me, Count Kálnoky continues to hold that the understandings established with England in 1887 must not only be considered as being still in full vigour, but that they constitute a valuable and important basis for the future action of the three



allied Powers in the Orient. Sir W. White inquired whether Count Kálnoky had alluded directly to any one of the many questions which, in the Orient, are the criterion of a straightforward and sincere community of interests and purposes, which community, if it manifest itself in peaceful undertakings, in times of action may all the more easily assume broader proportions. I replied that I had never failed to point out not only to my own Government, but to my Austro-Hungarian and German colleagues as well, all the opportunities, and the best means at the disposal of the three friendly Powers of the Mediterranean, of establishing a common supremacy which shall be both advantageous and profitable. I then went on to say that I was unaware whether any of the many questions—either of an economic, a religious, or a purely political nature—in concluding which, disagreements of long standing between Italy and Austria had had to be settled, had been dealt with by Count Kálnoky, who had merely mentioned the matter of Prince Ferdinand's ratification, an argument concerning which, to tell the truth, the three Powers as well as the three Embassies had never for a moment failed to hold the most complete and satisfactory identity of opinions. I pointed out to Sir W. White that, in any case, his previous assertions, made both to myself and to Baron Calice concerning the decay of the agreements between Italy, England, and Austria-Hungary with regard to Oriental matters, were considered by Count Kálnoky to be incongruous with the true state of affairs. Sir W. White replied that he was inclined to doubt whether Count Kálnoky had recently confirmed the agreements of 1887 as being

still in vigour and still feasible. He told me that in the course of a recent conversation with the Count he had called his attention to the fact that the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Orient was endangered by the system of double government prevailing here, where the Porte, possessing no power at all, is charged with maintaining the voluntary illusions of the allied Powers, while the only true power, which is that within the Palace, is hostile to these same allies. Nor had the Ambassador, so he told me, sought to hide how fatal, in his opinion, was the system adopted by Austro-Hungarian diplomacy of ensuring the Sultan's impunity, and encouraging his arbitrary tendencies for the sake of an apparent increase of influence, and to the real detriment of the most essential of those interests which are common to the friendly Powers in the East.

The true meaning of these important declarations on the part of the English Ambassador, to which he added some expressions of disapproval in speaking of the Italian policy, which, however, my previous report dispenses me from repeating, was made clear to me by certain friendly confidences which I had already received from him with regard to the Macedonian Question, which, being inseparable, for Greece, from that of Candia, now forms the true knot of the Balkan difficulties.

In making these confidences to me, Sir W White had expressed regret, (1) that the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, taking advantage of Turco-Russian schemings at the Palace against the development of English and Italian interests in connection with commercial and railroad matters in the Balkan Peninsula, should continue the policy of

economic exclusionism in Turkey, which had proved so unsuccessful in Roumania and Servia; (2) that Vienna had been adverse to the reforming of the council for the administration of the Ottoman National Debt and of the Ottoman Bank, both of which were instruments of political and financial monopoly, and contrary to the interests of England and Italy; (3) that the Servians should have been favoured in Macedonia when King Milan was on the throne, and the Bulgarians only since the arrival of Prince Ferdinand at Sofia; (4) that Vienna had adhered to the French and Russian principle of religious protection of the Catholics in the Balkan States by Austria-Hungary alone, as opposed to the Anglo-Italo-German principle of protection of its own subjects by each separate Power; (5) that Vienna had refused to admit of a collective action for the purpose of remonstrating with the Porte against the acts of brigandage committed upon the Ottoman railways which are under Austro-Hungarian protection as far as Constantinople and Salonica; (6) that anxiety had been displayed whenever the English or Italian fleet had appeared at Salonica or Smyrna; (7) that the Russian theory concerning the passage of troops through the Bosphorus had been recognised; (8) that all participation had been avoided in the protests which England and Italy had made against the complicity of the Palace with brigandage, and against the systematic spoliation of foreigners for the benefit of the civil list, which abuses were made possible by the unconditional protection afforded the Sultan by Austria-Hungary.

I observed that, notwithstanding all these accusations, England had carried on negotiations with

Austria-Hungary and not with Italy, concerning the present situation in Candia. Were we then in the presence of some new coalition against us, as had been the case at the Berlin Congress? To this Sir W. White made no reply.

As if to show me, as the English Ambassador had done, that the personal confidence prevailing between us had not been impaired, my German colleague came to see me on August 31, and frankly brought the conversation round to the grave question of the insecure condition of the agreements between the allies with regard to the East. After touching lightly upon the misunderstandings which have come to light as existing between the Cabinets of Rome and Berlin concerning the Candian Question, and alluding vaguely to a certain disposition in favour of Russia which, according to Monsieur de Radovitz, had recently been displayed at Rome, he said that it was no longer possible to obtain any information from our Austrian colleague concerning the political interests and the private rights compromised by the *curée finale* which is being carried on at the Palace against the last elements of vitality of the Ottoman Empire. He said that Baron Calice considers he has achieved all that is necessary in having established—during the recent incident at Uskub—that principle of religious protection which neither Germany, Italy, nor England would admit, and he is convinced that we may not hope that the Austro-Hungarian delegate will support the plan for removing the famous syndicate of speculators from the administration of the Ottoman National Debt. Even as regards brigandage, which is assuming in Turkey the same political character it wears in Crete, in the absence of Baron Calice he,



de Radovitz, as *Doyen*, had sought the authorisation of his Government to convoke the representatives of the Great Powers for the purpose of deciding what measures to adopt with the Porte for the benefit, also, of the subjects of lesser Powers. But the Cabinet of Vienna had been adverse to any collective action even within these narrow limits. Touching upon the question of Candia, Monsieur de Radovitz confided to me that the instructions imparted by Lord Salisbury to Sir W. White had been to the effect that the Ambassador should not only confer with the Count de Montebello, but 'find a means of agreeing with him,' which instructions had greatly surprised and alarmed both Radovitz and White himself. The purposes of the respective Powers had appeared so obscure that Monsieur Neli-dow, mistrustful of the French tendency to join with England, had advised his French colleague not to push negotiations any further. In conclusion, my German colleague added that the Candian Question would soon be settled, but that for the present it would be wiser to let it rest. This conclusion, indeed, coincides with the telegram from Berlin which Your Excellency communicated to me last night.

In a word, an Anglo-French understanding having been initiated during the negotiations, with regard to the affairs of Candia, and this as a compensation for the occupation of Egypt, His Italian Majesty's Ministry was, by the desire of our allies, excluded from these negotiations. This fact points directly towards the return of the situation of 1884, at which moment Italy, having, with regard to Egyptian matters, acted in systematic opposition to the spirit of the alliances she had contracted, saw that group of alliances gradually dissolve, and finally

found herself alone. This fact furthermore confirms the previsions expressed in my report of June 30, with regard to a situation which is disastrous to our interests in the Mediterranean, and which is the result of having allowed the general agreements with England to become a dead letter, such being the programme I am still under orders to carry out here in Constantinople, and concerning the wisdom of which my English and German colleagues and I have always been of one opinion. . . .

At the close of the year 1893 the political inertia of Italy had already borne all its fruit, and it was no easy matter for her to regain her lost position and persuade the other Powers to alter the new combinations into which they had entered. Caprivi and Kálnoky, Chancellors of the two Central Empires when Crispi withdrew from office in 1891, were still at the head of their governments, and we may conclude that they desired his return to power, for, at a time when Crispi appeared still far removed from office, the Ambassadors, Count Solms and Baron von Bruck, came to him with messages and good wishes from the Chancellors.

Solms called upon Crispi on October 13, 1893. From the Diary, from which we have so frequently quoted, we take the following notes :—

‘After a brief allusion to the state of general politics, the German Ambassador told me, with visible satisfaction, that the Emperor had invited him to dine at Potsdam, and that, in the course of a conversation concerning his relations with the Pope, he had charged his representative at Rome to inform me, immediately on his return, that he, the Emperor, had not forgotten what I had once said to him about the papal policy, and that he would never allow himself to be duped by the Vatican.

‘CRISPI.—The Pope is hostile to the Triple Alliance because it is an obstacle to the re-establishment of temporal power, and guarantees the possession of Rome by Italy.

‘SOLMS.—The Emperor is aware of this and knows what he is doing. Have you seen what his attitude has been towards Prince Bismarck? Our Sovereign’s offer to lend the Prince one of the Imperial Castles wherein to recuperate after his recent illness, has produced a wonderfully favourable impression in Germany. It means a reconciliation between the Emperor and his former Chancellor, and has deeply gratified the German people. And what is going on here in Italy? Will you continue with the present Ministry? What will your own attitude be?

‘CRISPI.—My attitude? I have nothing to do with active politics. . . .

‘SOLMS.—But Italy cannot possibly go on with the present Ministry!

‘CRISPI.—I can express no opinion. I am but an onlooker.’

On October 25 von Bruck called upon Crispi. We read in the Diary:—

‘A visit from von Bruck at 3.45 P.M.

‘The Baron is uneasy about the state of affairs in Italy. He states that they are also anxious at Vienna. . . .

‘BRUCK.—You must really take your country’s affairs in hand again. *Que voulez-vous?* Such language from the lips of an Austrian may appear strange to you, but that is all the more reason why you should listen to it. It is to our own interest that Italy should be well governed, and her present condition is causing us anxiety.

‘CRISPI.—I regret this, but I can do nothing. It is Italy’s misfortune. Our country is not steadfast in her policy, and that is why we are not respected as we should be abroad. In Mancini’s days, notwithstanding the Triple Alliance, Bismarck had no confidence in him. Berlin and Vienna began to trust the Italian government under Robilant. . . .

‘BRUCK.—Say rather under yourself. Under Robilant more or less confidence was felt; but Berlin and Vienna never doubted while you were in office. You must return to power.

‘CRISPI.— . . . I am an offspring of the revolution. I was a republican, and accepted monarchy only because monarchy would bring us unity. I have been loyal to this form of government, and never have I failed in my duty either as deputy or minister. The King should have taken all this into consideration; he should have appreciated my devotion at its just value. . . . Did I not love my country I should feel justified in withdrawing completely from politics. . . .

‘BRUCK.—You would be wrong to do so. You must continue to serve your King and country. I know of no one who can serve Italy so well, and do as much for her. The King is conscious of this, and, what is more, has said so to me on several occasions. . . .’

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was entrusted to Baron Blanc by Crispi, he himself did not relinquish his direct control of the foreign policy. To bring his clear judgment and the authority of his name to bear upon the leading international questions, was a duty he felt devolved upon him as President of the Council, and one he would, moreover, have been incapable of neglecting, for the foreign policy had always been the subject to which he had gladly devoted his most earnest attention.



During the opening months of the year 1894 Italy's condition was so serious as to demand all his attention. For some time there was no dissension in Parliament; personal ambitions were silenced; the parties, paralysed by dread, were following with anxious attention Crispi's rapid and energetic action against an anarchical movement which threatened the country with social and political chaos. Public order finally restored, the *moral* of the country revived and her finances regulated, Crispi was able at last to devote himself more fully to the international situation, although the fury of faction had already begun to rend him with its fangs.

Italy's foreign policy could not but be affected by her internal difficulties. Everywhere we were held in less consideration than before, and Count Tornielli, Italian Ambassador at London, wrote on January 8, 1894:—

‘The distorted reports spread by the French press and repeated in the English papers, which are the work of a few special correspondents of the English press residing in Italy, have contributed largely, during the last few months, towards deepening those prejudices and increasing the mistrust which my official and private protests have not sufficed to check. On the rare occasions when Lord Rosebery has spoken to me of our internal difficulties, he has done so with that moderation which is one of his characteristics, and, if I have understood his intentions aright, for the purpose of giving me an opportunity of explaining or denying the exaggerations of others. He has been ever ready to listen with kindly interest to my explanations and denials.’

In Germany, the confidence and friendship of the days of the first Crispi Ministry, which had been so solemnly manifested on the occasion of King Humbert's visit to Berlin in 1889, had become a memory of the past. Crispi's return to office revived the hope that the days of the Italo-German intimacy

might again return. 'Emperor William,' so Ambassador Lanza wrote, 'is confident that those clouds which now hover over our poor Italy are but evanescent, and that the King's good sense and the energy of his Government will soon sweep them away.' On March 5 General Lanza again wrote :—

'Last night, at a charity performance, I had the honour to confer with His Majesty the Emperor, near whom I was seated in the box.

'His Majesty deigned to express his congratulations on the victory achieved by His Italian Majesty's government during the recent discussions in Parliament, which resulted in a magnificent majority in its favour. As usual, the Emperor spoke of the Royal Family in terms of the warmest friendship, and of Italy with the greatest esteem and benevolence, expressing the hope that the energy and authority of the present head of the Cabinet (in whom he thoroughly appreciates these qualities), and the Monarch's clear discernment, may succeed in overcoming all the difficulties of the crisis through which our country is passing.

'His Majesty also praised the conduct of our troops during the painful events which have recently occurred to Sicily and in the Province of Massa-Carrara; he expressed his lively appreciation of the valour our troops displayed at the fight near Agordat, adding that he had had all the particulars of that encounter explained to him by the Chief of the General Staff, and I found, indeed, that he was better acquainted with these particulars than was I myself.'

At the beginning of April, Emperor William and King Humbert met at Venice. On this occasion the King had the kindness to telegraph as follows to Crispi :—

*To His Excellency Cavaliere Crispi,  
President of the Council of Ministers.*

His Majesty the Emperor will leave Venice to-morrow morning, bearing with him the most favourable impressions of this city, which has so worthily represented Italy in honouring our august friend and ally. In the course of our conversations His Majesty has frequently spoken of you, and always in terms of the warmest appreciation and highest esteem.

I have pleasure in acquainting you with His Majesty's especial benevolence for you, which you so well deserve, and in once more assuring you of my own cordial friendship.—Your affectionate

HUMBERT.

In October a crisis took place in the German Chancery, General Caprivi, Bismarck's successor, with whom Crispi was about to renew the relations which a previous crisis, that of 1891, had interrupted, withdrew from his high office. The immediate causes which determined this event were reported to Crispi in the following terms:—

‘The Chancellor and the Prussian Ministry were already entirely agreed upon the question of the measures to be adopted in combating the subversive parties. These measures themselves had been established, although no particulars concerning them are yet known; the approval of the Confederate Governments had already been obtained, and the decree for the opening of Parliament on November 15 had been published. His Majesty the Emperor was to have left last night for the shooting at Blankenburg, but in the course of the afternoon he received visits at Potsdam from Count Eulenburg, President of the Prussian Ministry, and

from Chancellor Count Caprivi. After his interviews with these gentlemen His Majesty announced the postponement of his departure. During the evening it began to be rumoured that the two high functionaries had tendered their resignations and that these resignations had been accepted. What had happened ?

‘ A brief conversation which I had last night with Count Eulenburg, whom I met at a *soirée* as if nothing had transpired, has enabled me to conjecture what has really taken place.

‘ When Count Caprivi, owing to the School Bill, resigned the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry, which office was assumed by Count Eulenburg in compliance with the wish of his Sovereign, he was already convinced that the separation of the two offices of Chancellor and President of the Prussian Ministry could not long endure, as it had in Bismarck’s day, without giving rise to disturbances and serious rivalry. The rivalry between Count Eulenburg and Count Caprivi reached a climax owing to the measures mentioned above, and it was only through the intervention of the Emperor himself that matters were adjusted. An agreement of a formal nature was eventually established, after the conclusion of which, and of the legislative provisions which it entailed, both statesmen hastened to place their portfolios at His Majesty’s disposal, whom the event undoubtedly convinced that the situation must be radically modified before the opening of Parliament. It being impossible to allow Count Eulenburg to withdraw without deeply wounding the conservative party, already hostile to Count Caprivi, and that statesman, on the other hand (who had repeatedly expressed



the desire to retire), not feeling able to bear the weight of both offices and defend before the Reichstag measures to which he had, in the main, always been opposed, His Majesty decided to accept both resignations, and proceeded to act with his usual determination of purpose.

‘The post of Chancellor of the Empire and President of the Prussian Ministry has now been offered to Prince Hohenlohe, at present Governor of Alsace-Lorraine. Should he accept we shall have the reign of the *Secretaries of State*, for, in my opinion, he no longer possesses the energy and resoluteness which this high and important office demands. However, his name and past career will suffice to ensure him the votes of the conservative parties and especially of the Prussian aristocracy, who have shown themselves hostile to Count Caprivi, both in and out of Parliament.’

On October 29 Prince Hohenlohe was appointed Chancellor of the Empire and President of the Prussian Ministry. Crispi despatched the following telegram to Lanza on this occasion :

‘The name of Hohenlohe, already beloved in Italy, is greeted to-day with the most lively satisfaction. Kindly let the Chancellor know that our country and government congratulate themselves on a nomination which, we are sure, will further the common interests of the two nations. CRISPI.’

Hohenlohe first sent Baron Marschall and then went himself to the Italian Embassy to return these civilities. Our Ambassador telegraphed to Minister Blanc on October 30 :—

‘Hohenlohe has called on me in person, and has charged me to express his warmest thanks and all good wishes to Your Excellency and to the Prime

Minister, instructing me also to say that he is happy to be able to contribute towards promoting the common interests of the two countries. The fact of this visit he has found time to pay me in the midst of so many pressing occupations, and without waiting to receive visits from the other Ambassadors and myself, is more eloquent even than his words in demonstrating how highly he esteems the head of His Majesty's government, with whom, he said, he was happy to be already acquainted, as well as with Your Excellency. This incident inspires me with hopes for the future.'

Emperor William's regard for Italy was confirmed by Lanza in his report of March 5, 1895, from which we transcribe the following interesting passage :—

‘On his return from Vienna, His Majesty the Emperor honoured me with a call, for the purpose, as he himself said, of expressing to me his satisfaction at having been able to clasp the hand of His Royal Highness the Duke of Aosta, on the occasion of the funeral of Archduke Albert. The visit was a long one, and His Majesty touched on many subjects. . . . In speaking at some length of Austria, of her impolitic conduct in Istria, etc., etc., His Majesty told me he had found Count Kálnoky less anxious concerning our relations with France, but still uneasy lest we may come to consider the Triple Alliance insufficiently advantageous, merely because it cannot supply us, at once and in times of peace, with the necessary means of satisfying our desires with regard to the territories of northern Africa and others as well. His Majesty having added: “Wait patiently. Let the occasion but present itself and you shall have whatever you

wish!" I hastened to remark, for the sake of cancelling any unpleasant impressions Count Kálnoky's words might have left on my august visitor's mind, that both His Majesty and the German government were too well acquainted with our policy, with the attitude the present Cabinet had assumed towards England with regard to African affairs, with our desire to become the true bond of union between England and the Powers of the Triple Alliance, to suspect us of wishing to create complications, which, indeed, was what we were making no small sacrifices to avoid doing. I went on to say that we had always been, and still were, thoroughly alive to our duties and rights; that we were most anxious that the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, which at present is threatened by France, should be preserved, and that I was at a loss to understand Count Kálnoky's uneasiness. Our anxiety concerning the unceasing efforts on the part of France to extend her dominion in Africa, is certainly not without reason, for those efforts, never encountering any opposition, may one day result in a series of accomplished facts—and I cited the port of Biserta—which it would take war, the very evil we are all striving to avoid, to readjust. His Majesty, who appeared to share my opinions, fully appreciates our policy towards England, is ready to support it in any emergency, and trusts that under the successors of Rosebery and Kimberley, who will certainly ere long assume the reins of government, that policy may receive the friendly approval and support which, up to the present, have been denied it. . . .'

The friendly relations prevailing between England and Germany had for many years been a most important factor in determining our international situation. It is well known

that our agreements with England concerning the *status quo* and the defence of our common interests in the Mediterranean and the East, complemented the stipulations of the Triple Alliance Treaty. Our Government was justly alarmed by the tendency of the English policy to compose Anglo-French dissensions by means of compensations in the Mediterranean, and to modify its uncompromising attitude towards Russia in the East, which policy was daily estranging England more and more from the Triple Alliance. On the first of March 1894, Gladstone definitely withdrew from office in consequence of the opposition of the House of Lords to Home Rule. His Ministry remained, however, under the presidency of Lord Rosebery, who entrusted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Lord Kimberley. Gladstone's withdrawal was welcomed with satisfaction in government circles at Berlin, where the fall of Rosebery, which took place on June 22, 1895, also produced a favourable impression. With the return of the conservatives, the German Chancery might hope that England would resume her former policy. Baron Marschall, Secretary of State at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, shared these hopes.

‘We may still frequently disagree with England,’ he said, ‘and I foresee, indeed, many disagreements in connection with colonial questions; but these are matters of secondary importance which will never interfere with our good understanding on those important questions which may arise in the Mediterranean, and would affect the interests of our allies. Such disagreements will but serve to ratify the Emperor’s opinion, who said to me, not long since, in discussing this matter: *Bah! wer sich liebt neckt sich! (qui s’aime se querelle!)*’

Soon after this, however, the question of the Transvaal arose to create ill-feeling. There came Emperor William’s telegram to Krüger, congratulating him, ‘who, without the help of the friendly Powers, had succeeded in restoring peace against the armed bands which had invaded his country, whose independence he had vindicated,’ and this was followed by



much bitter controversy both in the English and German press. At the very beginning of the misunderstanding, which, happily, was soon composed, Crispi, anxious to manifest his friendly sentiments towards both States, had hinted, by means of the following telegram despatched to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin, at mediation by Italy :—

‘The Anglo-German misunderstanding is an international misfortune, and a means of composing it must be speedily sought. The enemies of the Triple Alliance have much to gain from this disagreement, which, indeed, is most injurious to us. Our August Sovereign is greatly concerned, and has expressed to me his readiness to mediate between the parties with a friendly word, should this be deemed expedient. Mention this to Baron Holstein in my name, and should he encourage you to hope for success, speak to the Grand Chancellor himself.

‘Whatever the result of our offer may be, we shall at least have proved our good intentions and friendship.’

In the course of the first two months of the year 1896, the crisis concerning the alliances and agreements to which Italy had entrusted her safety, and to which she looked to guarantee her interests, became an accomplished fact.

To put it in a few words, the situation stood as follows: When the relations between England and Germany became strained, our ally Germany, pursuing a policy of her own, which was one of solicitude for Turkey, had helped Russia to obtain supremacy at Constantinople, and had, moreover, initiated a concessionary policy with France, one of the first fruits of which had been the Franco-German agreement (as appears from the protocol signed on February 4, 1894), which had recognised the Tripoli *Hinterland* as being within the sphere of French influence.

France, who had opened negotiations in 1891 for settling the boundaries of the Franco-Italian possessions in East

Africa, as well as for a convention which should ensure an economic regime calculated to satisfy the demands of Italian subjects and commerce in Tunis, withdrew her proposals when and because the Triple Alliance was renewed. She moreover maintained her hostile attitude, in Africa, sending money and arms to Harrar and Scioa, to be used against us.

England, free to disregard her agreements with Italy concerning the East and the Mediterranean, was interested solely in maintaining her insecure position in Egypt, and was inclined to yield to France in Africa, on all those points in which Italy was interested, with regard both to Harrar and Zeila as well as Tunis.

Russia, having made herself mistress of the Dardanelles, for the defence not only of her uncontested dominion in the Black Sea, but of her influence in Turkey as well, and having, by rupturing the European Concert, prevented Italy from regaining her position at England's side in the East, was scheming with France in Abyssinia, under pretext of establishing an Orthodox protectorate, for the real purpose of combating the spread of Italian influence.

And finally Austria-Hungary, her alliance with Italy notwithstanding, had felt at liberty to open commercial negotiations with the French government concerning Tunis, and this without previously notifying or informing the Italian government.

The result of all these circumstances was that Italy, bound to England, Germany, and Austria-Hungary by conventions of reciprocal guarantee, was, because of these very conventions, combated by France on all points of vital importance, and was left by her allies to struggle alone. Thus France, although unaware of the clauses of the Triple Alliance, had succeeded in discovering its scope by an intuitive process of elimination, and no longer hesitated to push her brutal though covert war of opposition to all Italian interests, sure that no obstacle would be placed in her way either by Germany or Austria. We may add that she had indemnified herself at our expense for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, by the acquisition of supremacy in the Western Mediterranean and the *Hinterlands* of the regions of northern Africa, from the Atlantic to the Upper Nile.

With Italy thus exposed, even in times of peace, to all the evils of war, there were but two ways open to the Italian government of safeguarding the country's interests; either Italy must detach herself from the Triple Alliance, thus yielding to pressure brought to bear by France, or she must denounce the Treaty and substitute for it another which should provide not only for war, but also offer Italy a guarantee in times of peace as well.

The first way bristled with dangers; if Italy followed it, it would lead her back to that state of isolation which had been hers down to the year 1882, when she joined the Austro-German Alliance, and she would, moreover, be exposed alike to the impositions of France and the resentment of her former allies. The second way was certainly preferable, and Crispi unhesitatingly chose it.

He who had never admitted that Italy's alliance with the Central Powers signified a surrender of Italian rights, must have been aware that the successes of his previous diplomatic career fully justified him in his confidence in his own capacity to break the ice of Austro-German exclusivism, which had been forming during the three years of his absence from office.

The following documents are of the greatest historical interest; they reveal the very knot of the question at issue, the patriotic anxiety of Crispi's government, and his own intentions.

*Diary, 20 January, 1896.*

Baron Pasetti, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, came here by appointment at three o'clock.

He began speaking of the agreements of 1887 and of their inadequacy to fulfil the purposes for which they had been established. The Baron spoke in terms of mistrust of the British Ministry, and complained that that Ministry had taken active steps at St. Petersburg without notifying the two allies. He went on to say that the agreements should be rendered more precise, that they should

be modified or amplified as the case might be, in order to make them more secure.

I replied by reviewing the history of the events which had led us to the above-named agreements. I said that, as far as I am concerned, I have never ceased to look upon the obligations assumed at that time as binding. I reminded him how these agreements had been neglected under Rosebery, and that, on Salisbury's assumption of office, we had asked to be informed of his views on the subject, and that he had assured us he also held these agreements to be still binding. I added that I trusted the English Minister, although, at times, he might appear to waver and hesitate.

Baron Pasetti declared his satisfaction at my favourable opinion of Lord Salisbury. He repeated, however, that the agreements of 1887 should be rendered more precise, and expressed some doubts concerning the attitude of Germany.

I felt obliged to reply to this observation by pointing out that the agreements in question had been concluded with the full assent of Berlin, and consequently with the approbation of Prince Bismarck, who had declared, however, that he must remain a stranger to these arrangements. He desired that the obligations should be concluded between Austria, England, and Italy, while Germany, standing aside for the time, would enter the lists if France should take an active part in the affairs of the Orient and of the Mediterranean.

Certainly the policy prevailing at Berlin to-day is still the same. This we have no right to doubt.

I concluded by declaring that Italy is loyal to the agreements of 1887, and that, should it be con-



sidered advisable to render them more precise, we would willingly consent to this. In that case, I said, it would be well to notify the Italian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors in London, in order that they might make the necessary arrangements with Lord Salisbury.

If Lord Salisbury had acted alone, he had done so, I declared, merely as a precaution, fearing that the two allies would not follow his lead. We must not forget what our conduct had been in 1878 and in 1882. Both during the war against Russia and the Egyptian insurrections, England had been left to her own devices. Add to this that for the last few years, since my withdrawal in 1891, each one of the Governments has acted independently, and we ourselves were left entirely alone to deal with certain Mediterranean questions — at Tunis, for example, and in Eritrea. France had had things entirely her own way.

And what has been going on in the East? The fleets were present at the butcheries committed by the Turks, and no one took any further trouble about them. Austria herself has acted independently.

‘Tell your Government,’ I said, ‘that Italy will loyally support her allies. Let us but agree upon a policy, and rest assured my Government will fulfil its obligations.’

*Diary, 21 January.*

Count Nigra and Baron Blanc came to see me at my own house at ten minutes past three o'clock this afternoon.

The conversation turned upon the agreements of 1887. I remarked to our Ambassador that these

had proved most inefficacious. Even in dealing with Oriental questions, England and Austria have each acted independently and without notifying the two allied Governments.

I told Nigra of the conversation I had yesterday with Pasetti, and that the Baron had told me that Vienna mistrusts Salisbury, and desires that the agreements of 1887 be rendered more precise as regards obligations and purposes.

I observed that, if any Power has a right to complain of the way England and Austria have acted, that Power is Italy. It is some years now since our Government has received any support from our two allies. The Continental Triple Alliance and the Triple Alliance of the East have left us to our own devices instead. This never happened previous to the year 1891, and as long as Bismarck was in office. I am therefore ready to consent to a revision of the agreements of 1887 for the purpose of rendering them more precise, but first of all I must demand that the signatories fulfil whatever obligations they may have assumed.

Count Nigra declared that there is no danger of Austria's seeking to form a closer union with Russia, the fact that the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs is a Pole being a sufficient guarantee for this. If we accept this premiss, we must conclude that Austria has much to gain by respecting our alliance.

Minister Blanc expressed his views concerning Austria's conduct towards ourselves. He is also of opinion that a revision of the agreements of 1887 would facilitate the preservation of the alliance.

Blanc left at about a quarter to four, but Nigra and I spent a good half hour longer together.

The Count emphasised his previous assertion that Austria's attitude towards ourselves is one of good faith.

We are to have another meeting.

*Diary, 22 January.*

Baron von Bülow arrived at six P.M.

He began by inquiring what news there was from Africa, and offered his congratulations on the conduct of our troops. Bringing the conversation round to European affairs, he declared that Germany would always be on our side. I expressed some doubt of this.

I said that I had indeed perceived the advantages of the alliance in Bismarck's day, but not afterwards with his successors. Previous to the year 1890, whenever a question arose, I had only to notify Bismarck, who would immediately make his voice heard in London or Paris, and the matter would be settled. We alone have felt the burden of the Triple Alliance. Along the frontiers of France, our implacable enemy, we are daily exposed to annoyances of every description.

The Baron could not deny that in Bismarck's day things had gone better for us. He went on to say, however, that his Government takes a lively interest in Italian affairs, and that we shall always find Germany on our side in every emergency.

We discussed the state of affairs in the Orient, and I did not neglect the opportunity of declaring to him that Europe has proved her own incompetence by allowing her fleets to remain inactive in Turkish waters.

With regard to France, I once more repeated that the hatred of that nation for our country, and the

treachery of its government, cause us very serious injury.

Diary, 9 *February*, 5 P.M.

I went to see Baron von Bülow at 5 P.M. for the purpose of discussing the relations prevailing between Italy and France. I said to the German Ambassador: 'On more than one occasion Berlin has advised us to seek a means of coming to an understanding with France on all those subjects which are of especial interest to the two nations.'

This we have never succeeded in accomplishing. Only a few days since, having had occasion to send a functionary of ours to Paris, we seized the opportunity of sounding Monsieur Bourgeois, who is, as you know, the head of the present French Ministry. The Italian functionary alluded to the various questions pending between ourselves and France, and said that there could be no better time than the present for establishing an understanding between the two governments, Crispi being at the head of Italian affairs.

Bourgeois replied more or less as follows:

'An understanding between the two countries is impossible so long as Italy remains a party to the Triple Alliance. The French nation would rebel against it. In this country all eyes are fixed upon the lost provinces, and all are aware that Italy's alliance with Germany is an obstacle in the way of their return to the mother country. You must accept the fact that, so long as you belong to the Triple Alliance, no understanding with us is possible.'

As you see, my dear Baron, Monsieur Bourgeois was very explicit, and his whole attitude towards us



is so manifestly hostile as to deprive us of all hope of establishing an understanding.

France is everywhere opposed to us. Both in Europe and in Africa we are confronted by the French government, which is always hostile. It is said that the Triple Alliance was established for the maintenance of peace. For us it has had the opposite effect. For us the Triple Alliance means war. In Italy they seek to ensnare us by means of the Vatican, and abroad all the weapons at the disposal of a malevolent and cunning diplomacy are used against us. Our commercial dealings are interfered with, and no treaty is possible either in Tunisia or between France and Italy. Unfortunately we have France for a neighbour, and we cannot avoid intercourse with her.

In the days of Bismarck matters were less difficult for us, because the Prince not infrequently made his voice heard in Paris.

All these complications arise because our participation in the Triple Alliance is counted a crime. You will oblige me by writing to Prince Hohenlohe on this subject, and also by seeing that these declarations of mine are communicated to the Emperor. Our position is intolerable. I repeat that this state of affairs is worse than war.

Baron von Bülow appeared deeply impressed by my words and promised to write to Berlin.

Crispi to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin :

ROME, 9 February, 1896.

SIGNOR AMBASCIATORE,—I feel it will be well to acquaint Your Excellency with a conversation I have had to-day with the German Ambassador.

I deemed it expedient that His Majesty the

Emperor William's representative at Rome should be as fully informed as is His Italian Majesty's representative at Berlin concerning the Italian government's views with regard to the position in which we are placed by the hostility of France and the Triple Alliance combined. In confirmation, therefore, of what Baron Blanc had already declared to von Bülow, I myself made a point of calling his attention to our position.

I told him that, being desirous, as always, of avoiding complications and ensuring peace, we had fully endorsed the views expressed to us on several occasions by the German government as regards the expediency of an understanding between France and Italy on all those points in which these countries have an especial interest. His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris was therefore instructed to avail himself of every opportunity of acquainting the French government with our more conciliatory intentions, and these instructions he faithfully carried out. Thus it came about that, seizing the opportunity afforded by the expressions of sympathy (amounting almost to a declaration of solidarity in the name of civilisation, against barbarism), which were expressed to His Italian Majesty's Ambassador by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the French Republic himself, concerning the misfortunes of our war in Africa, Count Tornielli was instructed to let it be once more understood that it was our desire to establish a definite understanding with France with regard to all the questions still pending between that country and Italy, such as the boundary question in East Africa, the personal and commercial regime in Tunis, etc., etc.

Once more the French government appeared at first to comprehend and appreciate the value of the very important concessions which we were ready to grant; but once more also, when on the point of concluding a positive understanding, the French government declared any such to be impossible.

I further stated to Baron von Bülow that while the Italian government had taken every official step that was possible for the purpose of establishing that understanding which Germany herself so ardently desired, personally I had been unwilling to account myself vanquished, and availing myself of the circumstance that a high and distinguished functionary of ours, who not only enjoys my fullest confidence but is a personal friend of Monsieur Bourgeois as well, was going to Paris, charged with a technical mission, I instructed him that, should he meet the French Prime Minister, he remind him that there could be no better time than the present for collaborating with the Italian government in settling all difficulties; that, as he was already aware, the Italian government was ready to bring the most favourable intentions to bear upon this undertaking, and that, moreover, the country would be willing to accept from a Ministry presided over by myself, what, under another Ministry, it might hold to be an act of weakness.

Now Monsieur Bourgeois' reply was to the following effect :

‘Let me inform you that the eyes of France are still fixed upon the lost provinces, and that nothing, no matter what may happen, will ever make her look elsewhere; no Frenchman will ever accept

the separation of Alsace and Lorraine from France as a definite and irrevocable fact; the French will always make all other questions subservient to this one; consequently there can never be any understanding between Italy and ourselves so long as Italy, by remaining the ally of Germany, shall help to maintain this separation.'

Baron von Bülow appeared deeply impressed by what I told him. I then went on to point out that all our efforts to ensure peace had been baffled by a determination which has been, and still is, common to all Ministers and Cabinets in France; that acts and numerous declarations have made this patent, and that this determination has deprived us of those benefits of peace which the Triple Alliance should have brought us, precisely because, owing to that alliance, France accounts herself justified in considering herself at war with us, and, to our great injury, displays her hostility at every point. What has transpired and is still going on in Abyssinia is but an illustration of this fact.

Continuing on this same subject, I reminded Baron von Bülow that while Prince Bismarck was Chancellor of the Empire, at a time when the Franco-Italian relations threatened to become even more strained, owing to the intolerance, the unjustifiable interference, and the hostility of France, the German government did not hesitate to give Paris to understand that a certain limit must not be overstepped. And Paris had promptly grasped this fact. It had thus been possible to peacefully regulate, in accordance with international law and justice, such incidents as that of the Greeks at Massowah, of the French Consulate at Florence, of the Atchinoff expedition, of the Italian institutions in Tunis, etc., etc. At



that time the French government was certainly forced to recognise that the Italo-German alliance was efficacious not only in case of war, but also in preventing war, and as ensuring mutual defence of the interests of the contracting parties even in times of peace.

Now, I added, it would seem that France has formed an entirely different conception of the Triple Alliance, and more especially of the Italo-German bond, a conception which emboldens France to insult Italy with impunity as the ally of Germany, being sure, the while, that Germany will make no protest.

It was therefore my wish, I said in conclusion, that Baron von Bülow should acquaint His Majesty the Emperor and His Excellency the Chancellor with all of these circumstances, being fully persuaded that they would give them their friendly attention.

I felt that these declarations on my part were all the more opportune as we are fast approaching the month of May, when the parties interested must decide whether or no it be advisable to confirm the treaty of alliance as it now stands.

Your Excellency is free to make use of your knowledge of my communications to Baron von Bülow in your dealings with the German government.

CRISPI.

The negotiations initiated at London for the purpose of establishing a definite agreement between Italy, Austria, and England with regard to affairs in the East and the Mediterranean, were coincident with the remonstrances which Crispi addressed to Germany. Had these negotiations succeeded, the remonstrances would have been less pressing and peremptory, for Italy would have found in her solidarity with England a safeguard for those interests with which the Triple

Alliance had nothing to do. As a matter of fact, the German Chancery used all its skill to induce Lord Salisbury to resume the policy which had been followed down to the year 1891. Ambassador Hatzfeldt was continually at the Foreign Office in those days, but he not infrequently met Monsieur de Courcel, the French Ambassador, there also. The result of the duel between the Triple Alliance and the Franco-Russian bond was a victory for this latter. Lord Salisbury confirmed the alteration of the British foreign policy, and on February 10 Count Nigra telegraphed as follows:—

‘Goluchowski tells me he has been informed by Deym that Salisbury has openly declared to him that he can assume no obligations towards Austria-Hungary and Italy, more precise than those of 1887.’

This meant that there was no intention of accepting the practical results of those obligations which had proved so inefficacious, especially when grudgingly fulfilled, and it was merely for courtesy’s sake that an unenthusiastic intention to collaborate was expressed, which did not exclude the possibility of many dissensions.

There was nothing left for the Italian government to do but appeal to its allies. But Germany was ill-disposed to consider the difficulties of Italy’s position. Prince Hohenlohe indeed,<sup>1</sup> old and weary, displayed alarm at Crispi’s demands. From Berlin they wrote:

‘The fear that is here entertained that we are seeking to force Germany’s hand certainly contributes towards rendering the Imperial government still more averse to making itself heard at Paris in

<sup>1</sup> To the honour of Crispi we quote the following passage from Prince Hohenlohe’s Diary:

‘Minister Crispi is a source of anxiety not only to Caprivi but to Marschall and Holstein as well, for no one can foretell what that restless individual may be capable of, and to make matters worse, he has chosen a hot-headed statesman like Blanc as Minister of Foreign Affairs. For the moment, the most important thing is to send a clever representative to Rome, and I think Holstein’s choice of Bernard Bülow for this post is a wise one.’—*Mémoires du Prince Clovis de Hohenlohe*, vol. iii.

support of our interests. I have abstained from talking of our *rights* and of Germany's obligations in the strict sense of the word, but I have not neglected to insist that all the difficulties we encounter at Paris, and all those that are created for us in Abyssinia, are due to the fact that Italy is a member of the Triple Alliance, and the only one of its members upon whom its enemies dare to vent their wrath. Baron Marschall, who is entirely of my opinion on this point, is also disposed to assist us. But what efficacious assistance can be afforded us without incurring fresh risks and injuries of a general order? The orders imparted at St. Petersburg to Prince Radolin, and the recent declarations of Prince Lobanoff with regard to Leontieff, leave no doubt that this German representative is acting with prudence and energy in our favour, and in collaboration with Count Maffei. But it is of far greater importance to us, and also far more necessary, that the authoritative voice of Germany should be heard on the banks of the Seine than at St. Petersburg, and here the difficulty begins. I have recently had long and frequent talks both with Baron Marschall and Baron Holstein. These gentlemen have, I must say, devoted much friendly attention to the question in all its aspects, but the answer I receive is always the same: "Paris is well aware of Germany's regard for Italy, and of the fact that, should France attack Italy, Germany would hasten to her defence; but as for intervening at the present moment, as for bringing pressure to bear on France with regard to questions such as that of boundaries in Africa and the commercial situation in Tunis, without any certitude that the result of such intervention would be both immediate

and favourable, this Germany cannot undertake to do. In times gone by, such as those to which His Excellency Crispi alludes, when a strong current in favour of war still existed in Germany, and France was less strong than she is to-day, and had not yet been emboldened by Russian support, Germany might well venture to *tenir le verbe haut*. But to expose herself to-day to a refusal or even a simple *fin de non-recevoir* on the part of France, this Germany will not undertake to do, nor can she do so indeed without exposing herself to the inevitable consequences of breaking *en visière* with the government of the Republic. The President of the Italian Council and Baron Blanc," so Baron Marschall said in conclusion, "must comprehend, as true statesmen, how delicate is Germany's position towards France, and how little it would take to disturb our relations with her and provoke complications which Italy should also be interested in avoiding."

Crispi replied as follows to the objections of which Ambassador Lanza had made himself the mouthpiece:—

‘Baron Blanc has acquainted me with the contents of your letter of the twenty-third of this month, in which you refer to mine of the ninth. . . .

‘We fully appreciate the delicacy of the attitude which Germany must maintain towards France in the present state of international affairs. The facts that there no longer exists in Germany a strong current in favour of war, and that France is stronger to-day than she once was, and has been emboldened by Russian support, do not appear to us to dispense Germany from considering the detriment to the strength and authority of the Triple Alliance which



must result from all the injury to which Italy is being subjected in defiance of the Triple Alliance, or rather, we might say, owing to its existence.

‘There is no need to repeat that, as a matter of fact, the difficulties with which we are called upon to cope spring, for the greater part, from the bonds that unite us to Germany; and while it is not our intention to pretend that, by observing the letter and spirit of the treaty of alliance, Berlin should expose herself to consequences which she may consider disproportionate, it is no less a fact that we are now forced to ask ourselves more anxiously than ever if, in how far, and in what manner, our interests are protected by a treaty whose main purpose is certainly that of preserving peace in Europe, but which cannot, nevertheless, be considered as entirely foreign to what, although more or less disguised, would, after all, be but the equivalent of a war waged outside of Europe against one or other of the allied Powers.

‘Paris is well aware—as both Baron Marschall and Baron Holstein have said—of Germany’s regard for Italy, and of the fact that, should France attack Italy, Germany would hasten to her defence. But the one thing certain is that these attacks on the part of France are no longer an hypothesis to be considered as possible in an uncertain future, but facts that already exist, that aim not only at combating Italy in Africa, but at weakening her in Europe as well.

‘I do not understand how Berlin can fail to see that this is destined to influence the international situation, of which the mainstay, even as regards Germany herself, is the strength of the Triple Alliance, for the two Empires cannot but be

affected, if only indirectly, by what diminishes the strength of Italy, just as Italy would be affected by whatever should diminish the strength of Germany or of Austria, either in Europe or abroad. Be this as it may, however, Berlin being determined not to cast off that reserve which has convinced France that Italy may be considered as isolated, it is but natural that we should henceforth study the treaty of alliance, not only in its bearings upon a general conflagration, but also in those which have produced this particular situation between France and Italy as apart from the other Powers.

‘And as the time is fast approaching when the three allied Powers shall be at liberty to come to a fresh conclusion concerning the compact that binds them, I have felt it incumbent upon me to call Your Excellency’s very especial attention to this serious question, that you may know what arguments to use in your dealings with the German government, or in discussing the matter with His Majesty the Emperor.

‘You have expressed your profound conviction of the importance and utility of this treaty, even of its absolute necessity, its disadvantages notwithstanding. I have given you my views, in part, on this point, and propose writing again to Your Excellency later on.

‘A treaty of alliance, even if it be concluded for the sole purpose of preventing war, must find its value greatly diminished if, in times of peace, it show itself incapable of protecting the interests of the contracting parties; and all the more so indeed, if we consider that, in the eyes of Italy and of the Italians, rather than a mere written compact, limited to certain given events, it is a question of moral and

political solidarity which, finding its justification in history, in geography, and in international logic, has placed that compact where it has but little to fear from its few remaining opponents, while, should this solidarity be disclaimed by Germany, the question of the utility of that compact would certainly assume a different aspect in the eyes of the great majority of our people.

‘Now Berlin cannot be ignorant of the strength which diplomatic compacts derive in our day from the support of the masses, this being even more the case when those compacts imply a brotherhood in arms and in the shedding of blood. ‘The efficacy of alliances to-day is proportionate indeed to the degree of popularity they enjoy, and they cannot be popular unless their utility be manifest.

‘The Italian people are not yet disillusioned with regard to the alliance with Germany, but who can guarantee that they may not be so to-morrow if things continue as they are? And should the force of circumstances summon the Italian government to fulfil its obligations towards Germany when the alliance has already become unpopular, that Government would certainly not fail in the accomplishment of its international duties, no matter who might be in power at the time, but, sensible of its own great weakness at home, that weakness must, of necessity, be manifest in the support it might still be able to afford its ally.

‘I cannot refrain, therefore, from insisting upon the gravity of a state of affairs which is becoming ever more intolerable to us, inasmuch as our subjection in times of formal peace to all the evils of a war for which the alliance fails to provide, and the absence of those advantages which, in case of war

declared, the alliance would be under obligation to guarantee, render uncertain and insecure the very foundations of our international position.'

The problem was so emphatically set forth that the Emperor himself felt the necessity of studying its solution, and, holding Crispi in high esteem, as he did, he determined to come to Italy for the purpose of conferring with him.

(Telegram.)

BERLIN, 29 February, 1896.

His Majesty the Emperor came to the Embassy to-day to request me to inform the King of his ardent desire to meet him, it being the Emperor's intention soon to take a sea voyage in Italian waters, which the physicians consider necessary for the Empress's health. His Majesty the Emperor proposes to travel to Genoa with Her Majesty the Empress in strictest incognito, and there to go aboard the imperial yacht without delay. From Genoa he would sail for Naples to visit his brother, proceed thence to the coast of Sicily, and finally go to Venice. In Venice the incognito might be cast aside, and, should this suit His Majesty the King's convenience, an official reception and meeting might take place.

LANZA.

Unfortunately, three days later Francesco Crispi was obliged to withdraw from office.

The Crispi Ministry was swept aside in consequence of a battle lost in Africa, and the programme of its foreign policy was quickly reduced to naught. The terms of the Triple Alliance were not modified to fit the new international situation, and the Italian Ministries that followed adopted that policy of concessions and compensations which brought no advantages of any sort, and whose only fruits were mistrust and injury. September 28, 1896, saw the signing of the Franco-Italian conventions concerning Tunisia, which failed to ensure



our economic and moral interests, and on October 1 the Maritime Convention was established by which the French mercantile navy alone would benefit. Then came the 'trade peace' of November 21, 1898, in defence of which 'political reasons' were alleged, and which in reality restored to French commerce a part of the territory it had lost without greatly benefiting Italian commerce. Then the new King's first journey beyond his own frontiers, after the tragedy at Monza, was not to Berlin but to St. Petersburg. And after that Italy recognised French hegemony in Morocco in exchange for a hypothetical freedom of action in Libya, which recognition determined her consequent attitude at Algesiras, favourable to France in the conflict raised by Germany.

In speaking of the conduct of our diplomacy at the Algesiras Conference, Prince von Bülow alluded to what he wittily termed, Italy's *tours de valse*. His sarcasm, however, was undeserved. As we have shown, it was Germany who had recommended these *tours de valse*, that she herself might be dispensed from joining in the dance, and they certainly resulted in those guarantees for Italian interests in the Mediterranean which they were intended to procure.



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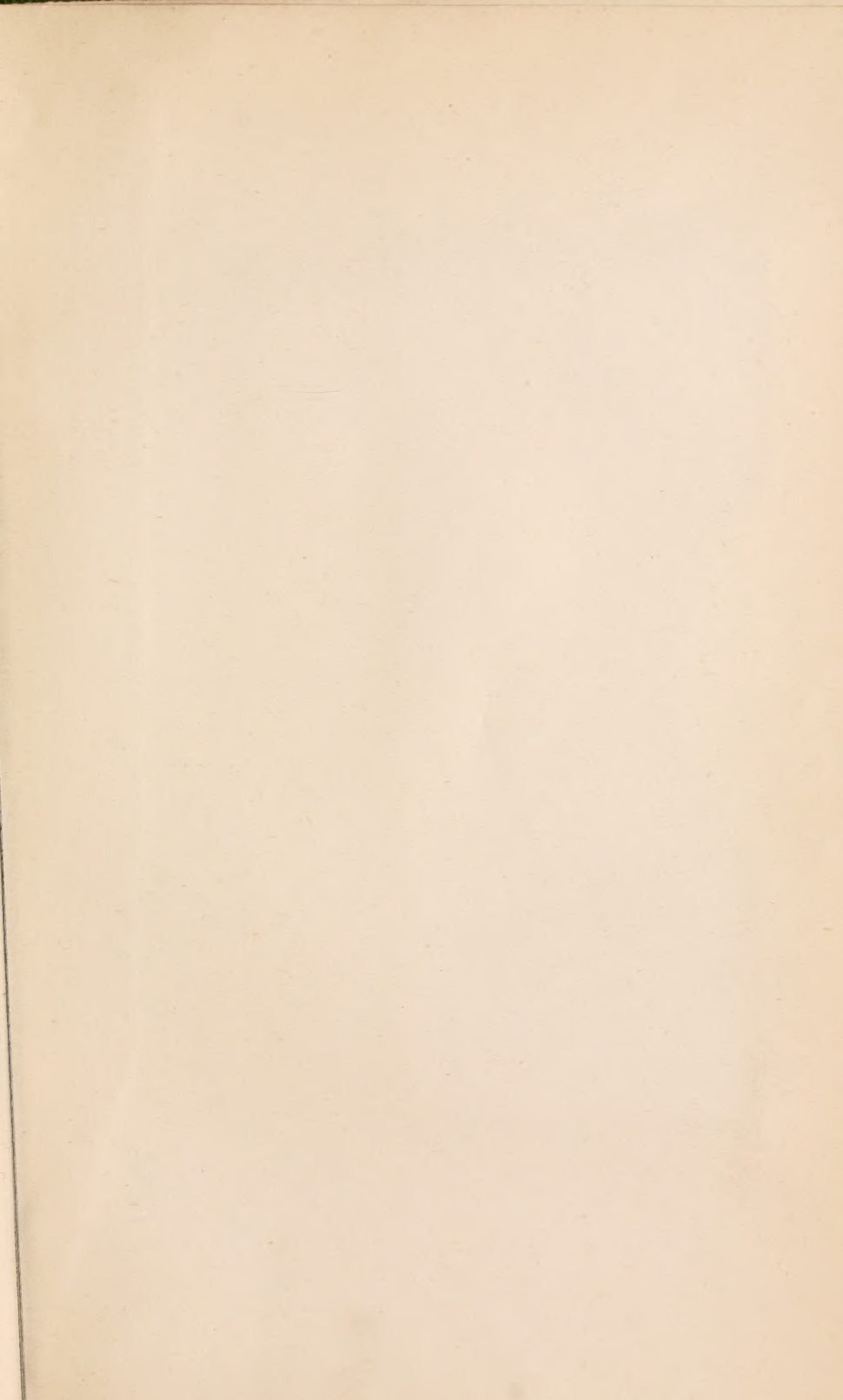
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